

COUNTDOWN
COACH INDUSTRY AWARDS
LAST CHANCE

TO ENTER

CBW

Coach and Bus Week

The PSV industry's news weekly • 27 July 1996 • Issue 228



LOW-FLOOR LOWDOWN

Small step makes big strides for access

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HOW GOOD WILL YOUR BREAKDOWN ASSISTANCE BE THIS SUMMER?



"The vehicle was attended to within 35 minutes of making the first call by someone who obviously knew what he was doing and the coach was mobile again within an hour of attendance. The costs... were at a very reasonable level."
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West Kingsdown Coaches

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Who's next?

AS *Coach and Bus Week* went to press on Tuesday, Steve Norris was rumoured to be officially resigning from his post as local transport and road safety minister.

The news came via one of his bus industry friends for, despite correspondence to the contrary, he is well liked by many bus operators, particularly in London. His easy manner and self confidence make him particularly endearing; a bit of a maverick, maybe, but undoubtedly memorable.

What may have set Steve Norris apart from some of the rest is that his background is in the automotive trade. He talks our language much of the time, and so will be missed. We wish Mr Norris the very best in the real world of business.

At the time of writing, we have no idea of his successor's identity, but he may well have reason to curse Steve Norris as the saga of the seatbelt legislation grinds on. For Mr Norris leaves just as the worms spill from the can. We still have the enforcement of the rules to sort out, the inevitable seatbelt sharks to harpoon in the courts, the muddle of new and conflicting rules being handed out by local authorities, and the issue of whether the driver bears any responsibility to ensure people wear their belts.

There's also more than a

hint of suspicion that many of the retro-fitted lapbelts in use, or more specifically, their anchorages, are only of any use in rollover; they won't take the stresses caused by a head-on impact. We are aware of testing at MIRA, and implore the results to be made public as soon as possible.

● We know that many of our readers are currently enjoying one of the biggest coach business booms for some months... making up for a poor May/June.

But tonight, before you leave the office, take five minutes to blow your own trumpet. The Coach Industry Awards loom, and we would very much like to hear from you — yes YOU! This is no time for false modesty... fill in the fax form on page 21 and enter.

With 21 categories, your company's greatest strength is bound to be on the list. And with certain exceptions, you've as much chance of winning if you run one coach or one hundred.



Mike Morgan
Editor

events

2-6 September: The 24th European Transport Forum, Brunel University, Uxbridge, London. Details from PTRC tel 0181 741 1516/fax 0181 741 5993

14-15 September: UK Bus Driver of the Year Final, Princes Parade, Blackpool. Details from Margaret Buckley, Bus and Coach Training Ltd tel: 01923 896607

16 September: Coaching For Pleasure Day, Legoland, Windsor. Details from Derrick J Alsop tel/fax 0115 973 2260

22 September: Amberley Museum Open Top Bus Show, Houghton Bridge, Amberley, West Sussex. Details from Howard Stenning tel 01798 831370, fax 01798 831831

23-24 September: Integrated Passenger Transport, Can It Work? Two-day CIT conference, Whitehall Place, London. Details from Jo Palmer 0171 233 7600, fax 0171 233 7611

1-3 October: Expocoach, Hall 3, NEC, Birmingham. Contact show manager, Mark Griffin on 01926 888123, fax 01926 888004

15 October: Braking into the 21st Century, one-day conference by Don, Wabco and Rockwell Automotive at Telford Exhibition Centre. Details from Marie Barker on 01244 391391

17 October: Buses Worldwide meeting, Fred Tallent Hall, Drummond Street, London NW1. Details from Ian Johnston, 3 Cypress Drive, Fleet, Hants, GU13 9HE

21-22 October: CPT annual conference, The Park Hotel, Cardiff. Details on 0171 831 7546/fax 0171 242 0053

21-24 October: Mitcar, Paris, Porte de Versailles, details on 00 33 1 41 29 97 27 fax 00 33 1 41 29 96 68

23-27 October: Autobus Rai 96, MECC, Maastricht, Holland. Details, tel 00 31 20 549 1212/fax 00 31 20 646 4469

▼ Coach and Bus

Latest recruit



LATEST recruit to Coach and Bus Live — the Silverstone show where operators can drive the vehicles — is bus manufacturer Optare.

The Leeds-based company has taken advantage of the show organisers' 'one-price policy' and reserved driving time on the famous race circuit. To give realistic driving conditions, a bus-testing layout will include mock bus stops and manoeuvres.

"We're always keen to exhibit at any major show," said an Optare spokesman. "If costs can be reduced,

that makes a valuable contribution to other promotional activity. "In some previous shows, where space, stands, phones and lighting, all have to be booked separately, it adds up to an expensive event. We prefer to see exactly what our outlay is at the start."

Coach and Bus Live is set for 20 to 22 March. Its organisers have built the Fleet Show — for company car users — into an event to rival the London Motor Show, and say they will do the same for their latest 'baby.'

Optare chose test-drive option at Coach and Bus Live



▼ Bus

Police probe decker accident

THE Runcorn double-deck bus crash, which injured 51 children and an adult, none seriously, is still the subject of police investigation.

▼ Obituary

John Irvine

JOHN Irvine of Golden Eagle Coaches of Salisbury has died, leaving his wife Jean, and four children, to run the family business. The Scottish operator was a former chairman of CPT's Scottish Council and Section One.

Despite claims by Cheshire County Council that the bus should not have been in the bus lane, and had ignored signing, it has since come to light that the only suggestion of restricted use is a 'Buses Only' sign.

The bus, run by Dobsons, was returning the children after a school outing. One youngster said he warned the driver, Geoffrey Bell, of the low bridge, but he had said he was taking a short cut. Minutes later, the child told the party to 'duck' before the impact

▼ Coach

Crash passes of seatbelts

'There would have been many more

by Mark Williams

THREE passengers from the Highland Heritage coach crash last Sunday were still in hospital as *Coach and Bus Week* went to press.

They were part of a group of 51 tour passengers on the Timeline-owned vehicle on the outbound journey of an Island tour. The driver

had been at the wheel for less than an hour.

The Neoplan left the road near Balloch, Loch Lomond, and fell on to its side in an embankment. In all, 40 of the passengers were injured. One of the worst injured was a 76-

▼ Bus

Girl falls under a s

A SCHOOL journey ended in disaster before it had even started when a 13-year-old fell from the exit beneath the wheels.

The Cardiff Bus vehicle's driver had become so concerned about rowdiness, he had turned back towards the school when Nimo Adan, of Butetown, fell out the service door, which had been opened using the emergency lever by other pupils.

Emergency services took an hour to free the teenager's legs, which had become trapped in the wheels. She is still seriously ill in hospital.

"We are increasingly concerned about the behavioural problems on these bus services," said Cardiff Bus md Frank Yates. "We are in regular dialogue with this school in particular and on the subject of pupils opening and closing the

▼ Bus

Stagecoach: record profits

STAGECOACH has announced record profits in the year ending April 96, up 44 per cent to £43.6 million.

Turnover was up 48 per cent from £337.7 million to £501.2 million, to give the Perth-based bus company a 17.4 per cent operating margin. Final dividend will be 4.6 p per share, to make a total of 6.7 p for the year.

● Full details of the preliminary results are in *Transit* this week. See opposite page.

engers tell s 'saviour'

serious injuries in Highland crash'

year-old man who lost his arm.

As soon as the accident was reported to Timeline, its md Ian Longworth — formerly of Shearings — went to Scotland to speak to the driver and passengers.

"The coach survived the accident very well," said Mr Longworth, in

Wigan. "It's an 18-month-old Transliner on Dennis Javelin and, like the entire fleet, is fitted with seatbelts.

"Our drivers are briefed to draw the attention of all passengers to the safety features on the vehicle. As far as I'm aware, the majority of the passengers were wearing



Neoplan Transliner superstructure remained intact, says Longworth

seatbelts." Consultant Dr Alex Clark of Leven Hospital, Alexandria, told CBW that those patients he treated had talked

afterwards about the value of seatbelts: "It was said to me that those wearing safety belts were uninjured. The passen-

gers reckoned that, if it had not been for the seatbelts, there would have been a lot more serious injuries."

school bus

emergency doors.

"We have problems with pupils throwing objects at the driver and spitting. Staff are as helpful as they can be, putting teachers on buses in addition to our inspectors. We will be taking an even more pro-active line, liaising yet again with the schools.

"This accident has had at least a short-term effect on the pupils' behaviour."

▼ In Court

Company fined for false labelling

QUICKFIT Safety Belt Services, of Camberley, has been fined £5,000 plus costs for supplying falsely-labelled seatbelts to the coach and bus industry.

The company, trading as Reflex Safety Systems of Stanmore, faced charges of applying a false trade description to belts, and supplying them to Deltastart. The action was brought by East Sussex County Council Trading Standards.

The court heard that a statement from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders had alerted Deltastart to the suspect belts as carrying bogus labels. Deltastart in turn complained to the Vehicle Certification Agency.

In mitigation, Quickfit told the court demand was outstripping supply when, in November 1994, the company was offered 5,000 Opel safety belts by a

Spanish manufacturer. They were approved by BSI for Allied Signal.

"There was a problem in that the type of tongue used on the belts was not compatible," said the company. "So we changed those components and, in doing so, destroyed the Allied Signal label."

According to Quickfit, the replacement label was incorrect owing to "a fax error." The company con-

sidered that, since they were previously approved, that approval would continue.

The company claimed it has subsequently got approval in Portugal, but this was not substantiated. "We have already started pursuing a civil action against Reflex Safety Systems seeking compensation," said Deltastart md Phill Bosson. "We have fitted about 700 of these belts and have had to replace them all."

▼ Coach and Bus

Volvo-owned Yeates drops Toyota franchise

ONE of the first changes by the restructured management of the Volvo-owned Yeates dealership is to drop the Toyota franchise, enabling it to focus on sale of products manufactured by its parent company.

As from 1 August, Yeates will no longer be a dealer for the Toyota Optimo leaving potential buyers of the Japanese-chassied, Portuguese-bodied small coach with a reduced

choice of dealers. Moseley in Taunton and Doncaster, Salvador Caetano UK and Erringtons are the four remaining outlets as the top-selling Optimo III approaches the change from Euro 1 to Euro 2 engine.

New Optimo sales have eased back after hitting 90 in 1995. Sales manager Steve Prime said he expected around 70 to be sold this

year ahead of the change to lower-emission engine forced by the 1 October legislation.

Mr Prime, who is looking to improve the geographical spread of Optimo dealers, confirmed he was looking for another dealer to replace Yeates.

He said: "I'm talking to a couple of people."

● Loughborough-based Yeates is a

wholly-owned subsidiary of Volvo Bus and sells Plaxton and Jonckheere-bodied Volvo coaches from B6 midi to B12 three-axle decker. As from 24 June, Bill Russell took over the reins of Yeates as md, having moved from his position at Warwick as Volvo director product marketing (CBW 15 June). Tony Harvey became Yeates sales and marketing director. **CBW**

◆◆◆ INSIDE TRANSIT THIS WEEK ◆◆◆ INSIDE TRANSIT THIS WEEK ◆◆◆ INSIDE TRANS

News

Blackpool Transport makes an eleventh-hour decision to pull out of buying Hyndburn Transport from the council. Find out why. Stagecoach makes under-

takings to reassure the Office of Fair Trading of good intent in the Cambus Holdings deal. We look at the detail. The TGWU's Mainline drivers say selling off Sheffield Supertram will do

nothing to end its cash crisis. Peter Sephton disagrees. EYMS ups its profit from £0.5 million to £1.26 million.

Plus

LTS chairman Bob Howells is

up-beat for future of the Misery Line. An exclusive interview for *Transit*.

● Sign up for your fortnightly bus and rail business news magazine... see page 59 of this issue

In brief

Ethanol fleet

SCANIA is to supply Stockholm Transport (SL) with 47 ethanol-powered MaxCi low-floor buses. This means the operator will have a total of 180 ethanol vehicles - the largest such fleet in the world. The vehicles meet standards for the City of Stockholm's green zone. SL has also ordered 28 conventional-powered buses.

Electric buses

NEWCASTLE upon Tyne will soon have three locally-built battery-powered buses on route M46 thanks to a Northern Electric partnership with the city council, Smith's Electric Vehicles, Northumbria Motor Services, Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive and the University of Newcastle.

Reduce pain

DOCTORS at the Pain Research Institute (PRI) have an audio programme which describes how to cope with back pain. Surveys show professional drivers have high risk of slipped disc and incidence of low back pain. A ten-point action plan advocates exercise and relaxation.

Deans feat

DEANS Powered Doors, manufacturer of powered doors, handrails and handrail fittings for the bus industry, has achieved registration to ISO 9001, the internationally recognised quality management systems standard with the British Standards Institute.

Look, no cash

MONDEX, the electronic cash payments development launched by NatWest, Midland Bank and BT in Swindon, is now an independent organisation owned by 17 major organisations across four continents. It hopes to introduce cashless payments around the world.

▼ Cover Story

Dart SLF hits first century

And Dennis has over 600 orders

By Mike Morgan

LAUNCHED last October and into production in January, the super-low-floor Dennis Dart has already hit its first century.

At the handover of the 100th Dart SLF, Dennis managing director John Smith said that, of the 350 of this latest development of the market-leading midibus chassis built at the Guildford plant over the first half of 1996, 100 had been bodied as momentum gathered pace since the official unveiling of the bus at Coach & Bus 95.

Dennis has orders for over 600 Dart SLFs from operators in the UK and overseas is claiming 55-60 per cent of the known low-floor market.

The landmark bus is one of 31 for British Bus subsidiary, London & Country. Twelve have Plaxton Pointer bodies for operation in West London while the remaining 19 — which include number 100 — have the new Spryte body developed by East Lancs, using Aluisse construction and John Worker's design, for the Dart SLF (CBW, 6 July).

London & Country will run the Sprytes in its Guildford & West Surrey operation. They are 31-seat nine-metre buses replacing older single-deckers in Woking and possibly

Horsham.

Chief engineer David Toy said: "We see ease of accessibility as important for all our passengers. The Dart SLF provides us with a cost-effective low-floor bus which benefits from the use of proven componentry."

Dennis md John Smith said: "We produced our first low-floor bus, the Lance SLF, in 1993. This showed there was a clear demand for improved accessibility in a proven product at an attractive price — and this is precisely what the Dart SLF provides."

"The design brief was for something which had to be commercially practical. It had to be affordable, on self-supporting chassis for world-wide application, and with minimum wheel intrusion."

Since the start of



Handover: John Smith (left) and David Toy

production of the original Dart at the end of 1989, Dennis has sold over 3,600 to operators throughout the UK and abroad.

First export SLFs are in service with, or in course of delivery to, bus companies in Australia, Holland, Hong Kong and New Zealand.

Over 3,500 of the original Dart — which continues in production — have been sold to over 200 operators. It was launched at the end of 1989 and has been bodied by over 20 bodybuilders.

Many have developed designs for the SLF, including lead bodybuilder Plaxton, Berkhof, East Lancs, Volgren of Australia and Wrights. Alexander, Marshall, UVG and Designline of New Zealand are expected to follow.

Dennis forecasts that accessibility will remain the key issue in public transport now that the purchasing pattern of the industry has literally turned on its head. Mr Smith said: "Now operators see real opportunities in making services more attractive for all bus users."

"Parents with push-chairs can wheel their children straight from the kerb on to the bus, while the absence of steps speeds boarding and alighting for everyone. This helps to reduce the time spent at bus stops, thus speeding up services. Low-floor buses are one design advance in which everybody wins."

In the Wright direction

THE Wright Crusader has got off to a flying start with an eight-vehicle London United order for route H25 in the Hounslow area. London United runs 600 vehicles and will be using the 10.2-metre Dennis Dart SLF/Crusaders to replace six-year-old van-derived minibuses with wheelchair lifts

The 32-seat buses will kneel and have been specified with Boge power ramps to speed access by wheelchair users.



Go West, young bus

PLYMOUTH Citybus has taken delivery of the bus that will carry the city forward to the year 2000, says managing director Brian Fisher.

The bus in question is the Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart SLF and Citybus has bought 10 — an investment launched by Lord Mayor of Plymouth,

Councillor Mrs Sylvia Belamy.

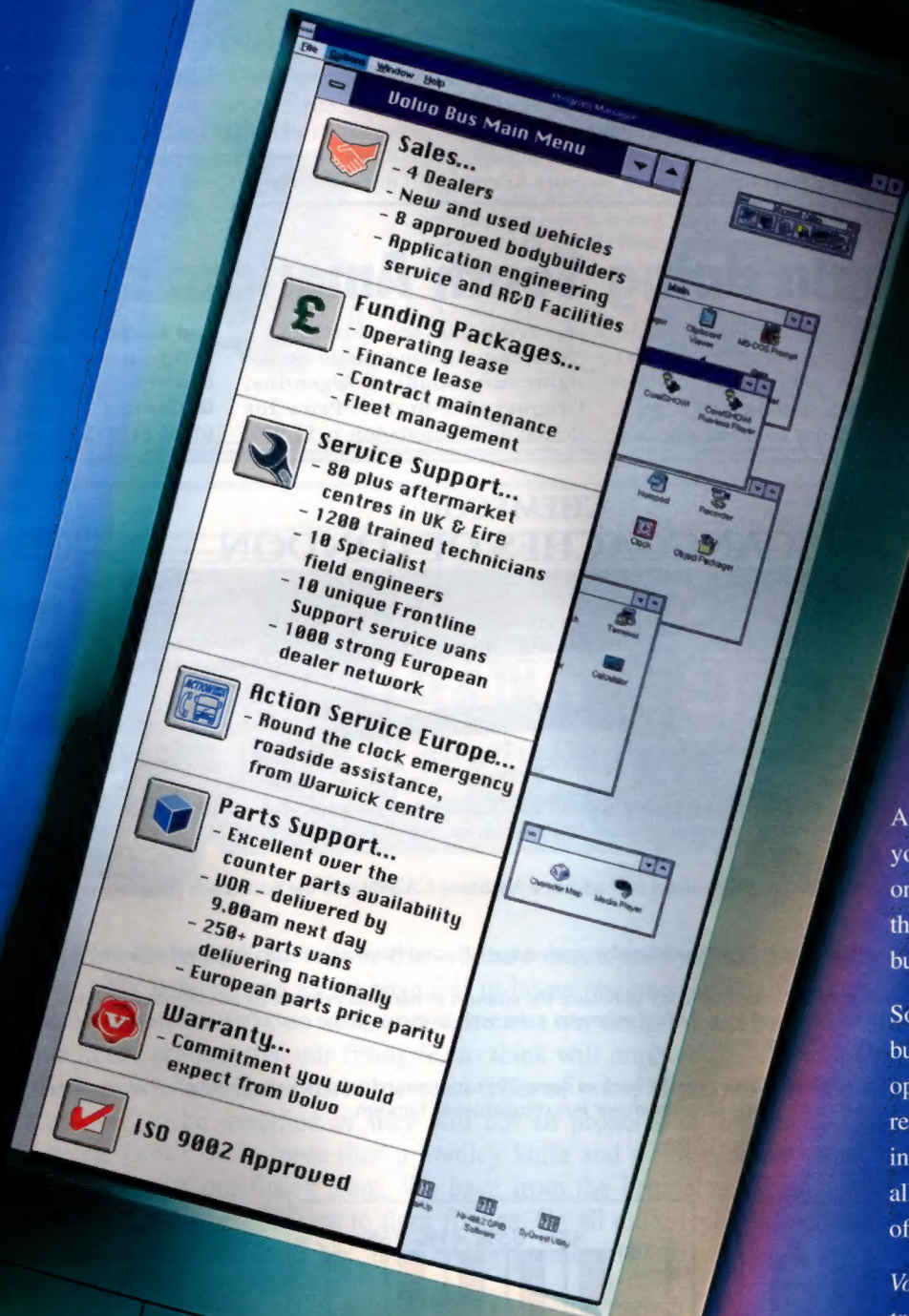
Over the last five years Citybus has spent £7.1 million, replacing 80 per cent of its fleet.

Pictured (left) is Plymouth Citybus md Brian Fisher showing Lord Mayor Councillor Mrs Sylvia Belamy the advantages of the SLF.

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▼ Coach and Bus

Soccer traffic study planned

TRANSPORT consultant Oscar Faber has been picked by Manchester United football club to co-ordinate a campaign for more bus and rail journeys to its games.

The league and cup champions club has added 10,000 more seats to its new North Stand, and says the congestion cars would cause with this extra capacity is unacceptable.

On average, 73 per cent of fans reach the game by car, and the figure will be higher — a total of 40,000 people — this coming season. Oscar Faber will be identifying provision of bus services, coaching for visiting club fans, and co-ordinated rail services to Old Trafford Stadium Halt. It has already studied the problem for the PTE.

▼ Minibus

Most minis belted: RAC

Schools have retrofitted fleets

By Mark Williams

THE public sector has equipped almost nine out of 10 minibuses with seatbelts, according to an RAC survey.

Schools, voluntary services and local authorities have mostly retrofitted belts — eight out of 10 respondents said their fleet was more than three

years old.

As an average of the 600 groups surveyed, mileage annually is 20,000, and fleet replacement cycle is between five and seven years.

Among other interesting statistics to emerge



RAC surveyed 600 groups in midibus sector

is the fact that two thirds of all driver training is done internally by the organisation concerned.

However, the RAC has said specialist training should be the preferred option.

▼ Coach

Tappin doing South American study tour

PAUL Tappin's series of world study tours continues early next year with an extravaganza journeying through South America.

The 12-day haul will take in a

very few public transport experiences, but will concentrate on the sights and sounds of Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. Price for shared accommodation is £1,975,

and for singles, £2,495, including flights, transfers, room only, and touring.

● Contact Tappins Coaches on 01235 819393 for full details

CHEMECOL SCANCOACHES OF LONDON



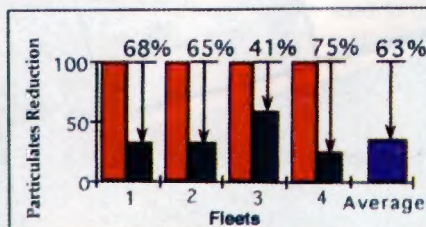
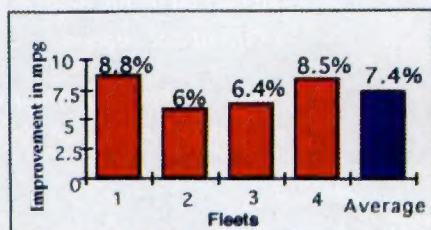
"Running Leaner & Greener With Additone" SAYS TONY FLETCHER

The introduction of ChemEcol's non metallic diesel fuel additive Additone CA2000 into the Scancoach premiere coach fleet is already reaping dividends.

The company have reduced harmful exhaust emission by an average 50% and have a fuel economy gain of over 8%.

"It is the responsibility of every fleet operator to try to reduce the amount of harmful exhaust emission into the environment" says Tony Fletcher of Scancoaches, "and to get a fuel economy gain, well in excess of the cost of the additive is a real bonus". Current savings are roundly £2000 per month.

ChemEcol have launched their new additive on the back of some 25 years research and development and have covered in excess of 6 million miles in service trials with some major bus companies in London.



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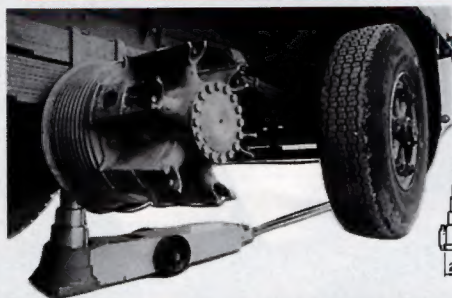


2
Weeks to go

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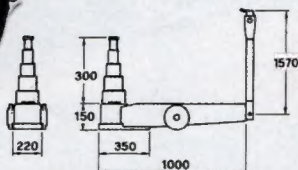
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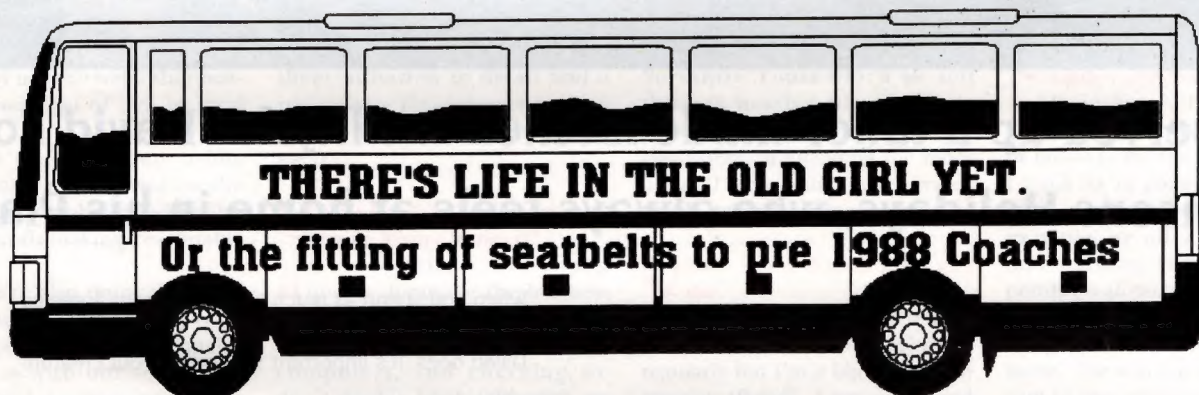
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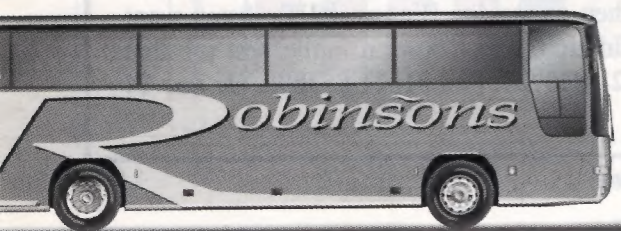
So, if all you want is the cheapest way out of the seatbelt nightmare then phone Joe Bloggs. **BUT**, if you want someone who is willing to stand up to any scrutiny and say **YES, I did that**, and I think it is the best job that could be done. Then phone **NATIONWIDE SEATBELTS Ltd** on 01621 840722. Fax 01621 853096. Or our 24 Hour advice line 0850 168189



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▼ Coach

Deirdre's secret of coaching success

Deirdre Brown of Eddie Brown Tours in Helperby, Yorks talks to Coaching for Profit. Deirdre - daughter of Eddie - runs the business with her husband, Philip (another Brown) and her mother. They are constantly looking for new angles... and it's an approach which is paying dividends

Q Where does most of your business come from?

A good profit-making private hire from clubs and societies as well as our own tours and excursions. We run around a thousand day trips every year. We also do a few schools contracts.

We had pulled out of that business at one stage when it became silly money but that gave the county council a chance to see how the cheapest tender is not necessarily the best deal. I know of one operator who voluntarily liquidated his business because he was so fed up with wafer-thin margins screwed out of him by local councils.

We've now won some school contract business on the back of our reliability and service and at profit-making reasonable rates.

We're also doing a considerable number of school trips because schools now want quality and safety with our seatbelted vehicles and are prepared to pay for this.

Q What is your biggest company asset?

An incredible amount of repeat business we get from our loyal customers. Our new excursion brochure was snapped up in days by customers who thoroughly enjoyed themselves and want to come back for more. It's the sort of loyalty I think only an operator with its family name on the side of the coach commands. It's due to sheer attention to detail and a real care for the customer from all levels - both staff and management.

Q How have you built your profitable leisure business?

It's a combination of letting quality dominate the business from every angle - the constant appraisal of all drivers, to the computers, and checking we don't double book (although we still use manual accounts). We



are good at promoting our name in the right places - not just the local press and posters in our area but also the big trade events such as the World Travel Market and the British Travel Trade Fair.

Both of these events helped us pick

up Continental tour operators looking for coach hire in the north. Brochures and mailshots help to build the business too. We also run our own York and Yorkshire Tours which we sell through hotels under the company name Yorktour. My mother also insists on including the more unusual day excursion venues eg textile mills and china makers.

Q How much training do you do?

We employ only experienced drivers and we 'observe' them regularly but I'm a big believer in training all staff. I am very proud of my staff and without their loy-

alty, the quality of our business would not be maintained.

I'd recommend the English Tourist Board courses - Welcome Host and Welcome Management. We're going for ISO 9002 but we're committed to Investors in People first. It's a big decision for us as we only have only 35 employees and 15 coaches, but customers make no concession for that in our aggressive market. We need good systems and people to deliver consistently as much as the big operators.

Q Where do you see significant market opportunities?

Listen carefully, work hard, deliver quality and the increase in business follows from all areas. I think we're good at listening to what our customers want. For example, we offer a free taxi to take passengers to the pick-up points on all our tours lasting over five days. It's a nice touch which keeps pulling them back for more. We also see more opportunity in the corporate and overseas business areas.

CBW



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Deirdre Brown's checklist to profitable coaching

- Don't compromise on price - while you're wasting time negotiating with someone on price, you're missing sales from people who are prepared to pay for quality.
- Listen to what your customers tell you - telephone them, mail them and LISTEN to what they want, give it to them and they'll thank you with repeat business.
- Make yourself known - trade fairs seem expensive but our investment has paid back handsomely. Promote your company by showing your face to your customers regularly and get first-hand feedback in the process.
- People are prepared to pay for quality - quality is the coach operator's key to success. Quality keeps staff. Quality keeps customers coming back for more.

Want to know much, much more? Coach and Bus Week's Coaching for Profit series of seminars continues with the latest... at Expo '96. For full details, call Roger Batson on 01494 671868.

▼ Coach and Bus

Raising the curtain on Czech Rep

The Czech show at Brno revealed a developing market with increasing reliance on imported technology

AFTER almost six years of the post-Communist era, the decline in the number of coaches and buses in service in the Czech Republic appears to have stabilised at around 21,500 vehicles.

While this is a reduction of over 1,800 units on 1994, utilisation of modern rolling stock is improved; under the former regime, buses in some country areas made one return trip a day. Additional State funding - with grants of between 10 to 20 per cent of the cost of new buses - is being made available to operators over the next four years while extra subsidies will be made to support bus operations.

At the recent Brno Show, coach and bus exhibits by Czech and foreign exhibitors underlined the continuing market potential in a country which is still coming to terms with the environ-

By Bill Godwin

ment of a competitive economy.

Although the latest Sap (automotive industry association) statistics identify only 32 'official' imports last year of passenger-carrying vehicles into the Czech Republic, this figure does not take into account the use of foreign-made vans and chassis converted locally for bus applications.

The exhibit of a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter-based minibus for a local CSAD operation in Plisen was, in fact, one of 15 similar vehicles recently supplied to the former State transport undertaking. Mercedes-Benz also showed a local conversion of an 0.614 D-based midibus with double outrigger doors to accelerate pas-

senger flow.

The country's largest coach and bus builder, Renault-associated Karosa, last year made 900 vehicles and sold 632 in the domestic market. The growing influence of RVI is marked



SOR midibus takes Iveco driveline

in the wider use of French power units, although Liaz and Cummins engines continue to be listed for certain models in the 900 series.

Another example of cooperation was exemplified by the Karosa CITY-BUS bearing a strong resemblance to the RVI R 312 design. At the forthcoming MITCAR event, in Paris, Karosa is expected to reveal a newly-developed schoolbus for export markets as well as home use.

Since the acquisition by Skoda last Autumn of Liaz activities, the latter company - for many years a notable supplier of axles running gear and other mechanical components to the bus sector - has become more directly involved in PCV work and at Brno

revealed the prototype of a new CNG-fuelled city bus chassis reflecting its Skoda connections.

SOR, of Libchavy, a small maker making a slow start in 1993, is gaining stature in the Czech domestic market with its much-refined SOR 7.5 midibus.

Last year this company, employing many former Karosa engineers and designers, built 32 buses and, at the Brno event, showed the latest version of its Iveco-powered vehicle.

The two-door body was fitted with optional wheelchair access amidships which has an intriguingly simple configuration allowing manual change-over from steps to a ramp.

The local Neoplan importer used the Brno

exhibition for the first public presentation of a Plauen-built 'Neobody' for 57 passengers on an MAN chassis. This is an extension, or perhaps reversion, of Neoplan activities into conventional coachbuilding although the vehicle features 'Transliner' styling.

Greater demand for low-capacity vehicles in private charter work was reflected by several exhibits in this sector, with VW and Mercedes-Benz conversions by Czech specialists given much prominence.

Rather more of a tentative nature was the display of a US-built, Ford E 350-based Champion Crusader minibus for 14 passengers, by an exhibitor also showing city buses from Greece (Elbo) as well as a Volvo B10 M articulated bus from Sunsundegui S.A., of Navarra, Spain.

CBW



Brno featured first public presentation of a Neoplan 'Neobody' coach



Spanish bodybuilder Sunsundegui's exhibit



Karosa LC 957 coach has Renault power unit

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▼ Maintenance

South Manchester Transport banned

And two directors can no longer hold O-licences



NORTH Western deputy traffic commissioner Brian Horner has revoked South Manchester Transport's O-licence and indefinitely banned directors Brian Corbett and Peter France from holding or obtaining an O-licence.

The company, of 25 Lowerbank, Denton, appeared before the deputy commissioner at a Manchester disciplinary inquiry because of concern over its maintenance record. Vehicle examiner Geoffrey Davidson said the company operated out of Adamson Industrial Estate in Hyde. The premises were approached by a potholed road. There was a large hole at the entrance. The maintenance records were acceptable, but some of the vehicles had been with the company some time and had no full maintenance history.

Six vehicles inspected by prior arrangement at Bredbury Testing Station proved below standard, with three immediate and one delayed prohibition, and six defect notices issued. Three vehicles were spot checked at the roadside, receiving one delayed and two immediate prohibitions.

Defects found included a road spring anchor pin fully displaced and another missing, seating severely dust laden, two passenger windows detached and likely to fall out, an emergency exit window warning device ineffective, and oil and fuel leaks.

In total 22 vehicles had been issued with prohibitions, 15 being immediate and seven delayed. Nineteen of the prohibitions had been issued since a previous public inquiry in October 1995. Several of

by Michael Jewell

the prohibitions had been issued when vehicles had been presented for annual test.

A vehicle involved in an accident in November was found to have braking efficiency well below standard, 37 per cent when the minimum was 50 per cent. There was an excessive air leak when the foot brake was applied. Eight out of ten wheelnuts on one wheel were not secure. The battery box was insecure and likely to cause injury.

A second vehicle was involved in an accident and a fuel leak was found. The severity of the defect was indicative of extreme negligence on the part of the company. Mr Davidson thought

their condition.

Mr Horner said that, if a company operating 10 vehicles attracted the number of prohibitions this company had it was not surprising directions were given to spot check its vehicles. Vehicles had been found with serious safety critical defects jeopardising public safety many times with potentially catastrophic results.

Financial evidence was heard in private at the company's request.

Peter France said he had been responsible for book-keeping and record-keeping of the maintenance system. After Christmas he became ill and was unable to spend much time at work. Another bus operator had been engaged who would be

working full time for South Manchester after next week. He would be in charge of the workshop. The person concerned had one month to look at the system.

Advice he had given had been taken on board. They had also taken on another fully qualified fitter. Both these people were being brought in to provide quality control. The period between inspections was being reduced to three weeks and some of the maintenance would be contracted out. Mr France thought the length of the inspection intervals, bearing in mind the mileage, had contributed to vehicle condition. The company had been looking after 15 to 16 vehicles. That was too many so they had decided to reduce the number of vehicles to seven with two spares.

Mr France conceded he was not a CPC holder or a time-served fitter.



Vehicles had been targeted due to condition

that, although the company had taken on extra staff, it was finding it hard to cope with aged vehicles. Three vehicles had been checked in the last month and one prohibition and two defect notices issued.

A fourth vehicle was asked for but it never turned up and no excuse was given. There was a history of warning letters relating to excessive smoke but hardly any replies from the company.

For the company, James Backhouse suggested there had obviously been a concerted effort to target it but Mr Davidson said the vehicles had only been targeted due to

▼ Licensing

Minibus op given absolute discharge by magistrates



THE operator of an unlicensed minibus, who claimed he had been following advice from a local authority licensing enforcement officer, was given an absolute discharge after admitting a number of offences before Buxton magistrates.

Leslie Naden, of 121 Leek Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, pleaded guilty to driving the vehicle when not the holder of a PCV driving licence, and using it without a Certificate of Initial Fitness, without a PSV test certificate and without an O-licence.

Prosecuting for the Vehicle Inspectorate, John Heaton said that, in October, a traffic examiner was on duty on the A6 at Buxton when he saw a Leyland minibus fitted with nine seats in addition to the driver's seat.

The driver, Mr Naden, said he was the owner/operator of the vehicle and he was carrying six children and one adult on a contract for the local education authority. Mr Naden admitted he did not hold a psv driving licence or have an O-licence. Subsequent inquiries revealed the vehicle did not have a Certificate of Initial Fitness and no psv test certificate was in force.

All the offences arose out of the fact the vehicle concerned was a public service vehicle within the meaning of Section 1 of the 1981 Public Passenger Vehicles Act, in that it was constructed or adapted so as to carry more than eight passengers and being used for hire or reward. To be able to lawfully drive such a vehicle Mr Naden needed to take a further driving test and a medical. He also needed to be licensed to operate the vehicle, and the vehicle itself had to have a Certificate of Initial Fitness and a psv test certificate.

Mr Heaton maintained the fact the vehicle had a first-aid kit on the front seat, preventing its use, did not prevent it being "constructed or adapted so as to carry more than eight passengers."

For Mr Naden, John Bunting said the defence accepted the mere presence of a first-aid kit on the front seat did not take the vehicle outside the psv regulations. However, Mr Naden had received different advice from his local authority and had thought he was dealing with a private-hire vehicle.

The local authority's view had been the first-aid box was a permanent feature which took the seat out of commission and Mr Naden had relied upon that view.

Mr Naden had now removed the rear-most double seat and substituted a single seat to overcome the problem.

Mr Naden said the vehicle had last passed its local authority check in September 1995. He calculated it had been presented for test about 14 times in all.

The magistrates found special reasons for not endorsing Mr Naden's driving licence.



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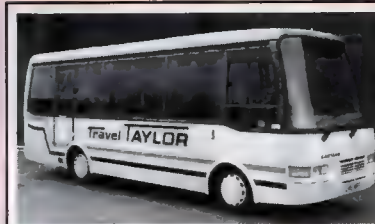
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▼ UK

Brick attacks on resort coaches

Operators' concern over Blackpool incidents

VANDALS from a council-run gypsy camp are being blamed for brick attacks on coaches coming into Blackpool.

Two West Yorkshire coach operators have reported incidents where bricks and other missiles have been hurled at their vehicles from bridges over Yeadon Way, the main route off the M55 to the resort's coach parks.

Barry Rennison, of Independent Coachways, said: "The panel of one of my coaches was badly damaged in the latest incident. I have had drivers reporting that the youngsters

by William Golden

have the bricks all lined up, ready to attack. Fortunately, there has been no injuries but the potential danger is there."

Another coach, belonging to JAK Travel Services, was the intended target of an attack but the vehicle was undamaged.

A spokesman for Blackpool police said they were aware of such incidents and, when they were notified, sent a patrol car to investigate. He said: "Unfortunately, these sort of incidents are all too common and it is not a

problem confined to Blackpool.

"These youngsters seem to think it is a laugh and do not realise the seriousness of their antics.

"When we do get a report, we send a patrol car to the scene but, of course, the youngsters have disappeared by then and regroup after we have gone."

The spokesman added that any other operator who was involved in an incident of a similar nature should report it to the Blackpool police communications room on 01253 754238.



Plain sailing: Mr Farrell (left) with Wilco de Jong (centre), marketing manager for The Hague Visitors and Convention Bureau; and Theo Lingmont, the director of the Netherlands Board of Tourism,

▼ Europe

Pushing the boat out

MORE than 100 operators from the north of England and Scotland attended two workshops on The Hague organised by North Sea Ferries in Hull and Newcastle Upon Tyne.

They were held on board *Minerva*, an historic sailing schooner that had

sailed across from Holland. Tony Farrell, UK passenger sales and marketing manager for North Sea Ferries, said: "The workshops were a great success, with many new contacts being made that undoubtedly lead to increased bookings in the future."

▼ Europe

Screen test for new French tour opportunities

OPERATORS were put in the picture about tour opportunities to Disneyland Paris when they joined Albatross Tours and other members of the travel trade for a special screening of the new Disney film, *The Hunchback of Notre*

Dame. The film show - at the Odeon, Leicester Square - coincided with the official launch of the new direct Eurostar service from Waterloo to the French theme park.

Caron Sotgiu, Albatross

Tours' sales and marketing manager, said: "As one of three preferred UK wholesalers for Disneyland Paris, we can team up with our partners at EPS to offer packages to operators, including on-site accommodation. The real

benefit for them is that it just takes one phone call and everything is arranged."

For more information contact Ms Sotgiu at Albatross Tours on 01622 790700 (fax 01622 790701).

CBW



WEATHER

City	Average temperature last week	City	Average temperature last week
Amsterdam	16C/61F	Madrid	33C/91F
Athens	32C/90F	Oslo	19F/66F
Berlin	16C/61F	Paris	25C/77F
Brussels	19C/66F	Rome	27C/81F
Dublin	22C/72F	Stockholm	14C/57F
Lisbon	28C/83F	Vienna	21C/70F
Luxembourg	22C/72F	Zurich	23C/73F

DIESEL PRICES

Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling	Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling
Austria	0.57	Luxembourg	0.43
Belgium	0.52	Netherlands	0.53
Eire	0.54	Norway	0.73
France	0.52	Portugal	0.46
Germany	0.51	Spain	0.46
Greece	0.42	Sweden	0.63
Italy	0.59	Switzerland	0.61

(Courtesy AA Roadwatch)

HOLIDAY POUND

Country	Currency exchange rate	Country	Currency exchange rate
Austria	15.64 Sch/£	Italy	2.299 Lire/£
Belgium	45.76Bfr/£	Netherlands	2.54 Gld/£
Denmark	8.61 K/£	Norway	9.61 NKr/£
Eire	0.93 Punt/£	Portugal	229 Es/£
France	7.51F/£	Spain	192 Pta/£
Germany	2.28 DM/£	Sweden	10.20 SKr/£
Greece	365 D/£	Switzerland	1.88 Sfr/£

Once a PSV, always...

Q Recently you quoted from Section 1 of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 the fact that, once a vehicle had been used as a PSV, it remains a PSV until that use is permanently discontinued. Is there any relaxation for vehicles with 12 seats or fewer? I am aware of a taxi operator who uses eight and 11 seaters as PSVs and taxis according to circumstances. I have also noticed PSV O-licence discs on display in small vehicles including cars. Does this make them permanently PSVs?

JN, Lancs

a I think your opening sentence relates to a question I answered on 4 May 1996 which was specifically about the use of a 12-seater minibus as a taxi. There are, indeed, statutory exceptions to the 'once a PSV - always a PSV' rule of Section 1 for small vehicles.

That section makes it plain this rule applies (a) to a vehicle adapted to carry more than eight passengers which is being used to carry passengers for hire and reward; and (b) to other vehicles used for carrying passengers for hire and reward at separate fares in the course of a business.

However, the part relating to vehicles seating eight or fewer passengers is further qualified. Section 1(3) gives exemption from this rule to such vehicles when being used for the unadvertised sharing of taxis and hire cars and for private hire, the arrangements for which have not been advertised to the public.

While a vehicle with fewer than eight seats is thus unlikely to permanently become a PSV by using it as such, there is nothing to prevent it being used as a PSV (and displaying an O-licence disc) - not least of all because the wording of Section 1 makes it clear that small vehicles may be so used.

Indeed, a registered local bus service can only be operated by a public service vehicle (Transport Act 1985 Section 2).

Consequently the Transport Act 1985 at Section 12 makes provision for taxi operators to obtain special PSV O-licences, and discs, to cover such eventuality. Section 12(8) gives a specific exemption from the 'once a PSV' rule of the PPV Act Section 1 for vehicles thus used.

The effect of all this is to very much restrict the application of the 'always a PSV' rule for vehicles capable of carrying eight or fewer passengers - but not stop them from being operated under a full or special PSV licence.

Indeed, I should perhaps mention that many operators prefer to operate eight (or fewer) seater PCVs when used, say, for feeder journeys, badged with a PSV O-licence disc. This avoids the additional expense and complications of complying with any local authority by-laws for private hire cars. This is quite legal, although it may appear to be a slight eccentric-



Questions



Answers

ity of the law! I can, however, see no way in which anything larger than that can be used 'on and off' as a PSV.

What's our liability?

Q We recently had a passenger die as he stepped off a coach in Spain. He had, in fact, taken out holiday insurance and the insurers dealt with the matter in a sympathetic and efficient manner. But what is our liability under the Package Tour Regulations? Where would we have stood had this customer not been insured?

MC, Somerset

a The matter of holiday insurance and your liability under the Package Travel Regulations are two separate issues. The only thing which they would seem to have in common is that, whether or not there is insurance cover, you have no responsibility for dealing with a body. It may fall to insurers, to relatives, or to the executor of the deceased; but I can think of no circumstances where it would be the responsibility of an operator. You may have all sorts of

duties, under many enactments, to 'passengers' but passengers are living beings, not corpses.

While there are many compelling reasons to encourage passengers to take out holiday insurance, or even make doing so compulsory; the saving of problems for the operator should passengers die when on tour is not one of them.

Under the Package Travel Regulations (S.I. 1992 No 3288), as the provider of a package you are liable to the consumer for its proper execution and thus for damages if the contract is not performed fully and correctly, irrespective of who actually provided (or failed to provide) the part which gives rise to any claim. On the face of it, this could range from deficiencies in hotel service and provision through to death or injury arising out of a part of the package.

Let me illustrate this. If a person does not enjoy a meal purchased while on holiday that is not part of the package, or is injured (or killed) in a road accident while out taking a stroll along the promenade, or dies from natural causes while on holiday — the circumstances are so divorced from the package that no liability falls on the packager.

However, if a meal provided as part of the package causes food poisoning, or the passenger is killed or injured on your coach (or a ferry which is included in the package), or dies when the hotel collapses or catches fire, on the face of it, it is you who will be liable for damages. In the case of death, this would not be just to bring the body home etc, but for causing the death.

I said "on the face of it" because, fortunately the Package Tour Regulations do provide certain exemptions. Firstly, if the cause is attributable to the consumer (eg fire started by consumer smoking in bed). Secondly, if the circumstances were caused by a third party to the contract and were unforeseeable and unavoidable (anything from a war to a strike). Thirdly, if the events are unusual and unforeseeable, the consequences of which could not have been avoided even if exercising all due care, or which could not have been foreseen or forestalled.

While that considerably reduces the packager's liability to claims for damages, it does not totally remove the risk - not least of all because it assumes a far greater degree of inspection and verification of the safety and satisfaction of package components than is reasonably practicable for each and every package departure.

It may also be difficult to prove that any of these defences actually applied. While, in theory, you would make a claim against the provider of the defective service to offset the liability to your customer, the recovery of money might take a long time and involve litigation in another country. It is also possible that the person or business concerned vanishes or has no means to pay.

It, therefore, makes very good sense to insure against the risk of compensation claims by passengers and, indeed, their executors too, although a claim arising from a death caused by the performance of a package holiday is perhaps more remote than some of the other possibilities.



Questions on coach and bus operation should be sent to: Marksman, c/o Coach and Bus Week, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS or fax 01733 467154 Marksman will answer more questions on 3 August 1996



Look folks, no speed limiter in use here

IF you REALLY want a racy-looking paint job, SJ Carlton's paint shop manager Russ Barnes is your man.

As you can see from the picture, Mr Barnes is a bit racy himself, hurtling round Aintree circuit at 140 mph in this understandably blurred picture. Yes, there's no speed limiter fitted to his Kawasaki ZXR750.

SJ Carlton stumps up sponsorship for his racing, currently

contesting the 750cc and 1300cc open class of production racing, having already tackled circuits at Snetterton, Cadwell Park, Darley Moor, Three Sisters and Elvington. One is to hope Messrs S. Johnson and W. Povey are there from time to time to cheer him and his fellow enthusiast and tuner Paul Carter along.

A small tip; if you reverse over a motorbike in SJ Carlton's yard, best not to hang around...



Is this a case of rough justice?

NIGEL Bebbis is having to deplete his bank balance by £50,000 so he can build a new road for heavy vehicles.

Nothing out of the ordinary for a coach operator to have to build his own depot driveway, you might think. Only the road isn't for him... it's for quarry lorries which would otherwise pass within 13 inches of his front window. In what seems to us to be rough justice, he has

lost a two-year court battle to have a landfill road re-routed around his 17th century farmhouse. If the council had their way, 130 trucks a day would be thundering past 33 inches from his front door, six days a week. Believe it or not, Vale of Glamorgan council see nothing wrong with that, and neither do the courts, so he's having to pay for tarmac and planning permission himself to keep them at bay...

Bill guides us to the truth, but not quite

OUR overseas correspondent Bill Godwin picked us up on the throwaway line that the drive-by-wire Prisma (CBW, 13 July) is a world first. According to Bill, a Nuremberg project in the mid-80s ran an MAN-based bus along wire guidance to Fürth.

We'll take your word for it Bill, unless — as Esther Rantzen used to say — anybody knows different... **CBW**



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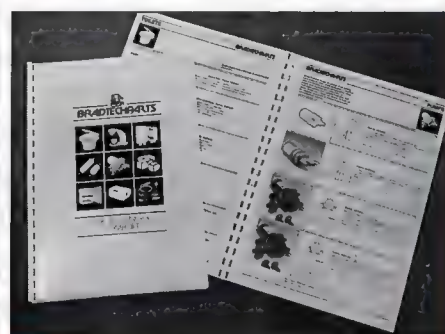
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Coach and Bus Week ending 27 July 1996

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Seatbelts situation is now totally confusing

From Raymond Maddock

The position regarding seatbelts in school coaches is becoming more ridiculous by the day. There seems to be total confusion between the road safety minister and the police on what the rules mean. In trying to get answers to questions from road safety minister Steven Norris, I was told the enforcement of the law was up to the police and the interpretation was for the courts and, by implication, the laws were not his responsibility to explain (letter dated 22 March).

I would give two examples. When asked if the fitting of a speed limiter set at a maximum of 59 mph would make a coach into a bus for the purposes of the new laws, the Cheshire Constabulary by letter of 17 May stated: "Vehicles designed to travel at speeds exceeding 60 mph, if fitted with a speed limiter set at 59 mph, will still be subject to the seatbelt legislation."

However, when Steven Norris was asked the same question, I was told by letter dated 14 June from the Vehicle Standards and Engineering: "A 53-seater coach in excess of 7.5 tonnes fitted with a speed limiter restricting the speed to 59 mph will, if this is its maximum speed, be defined as a bus."

If a 53-seater coach is carrying fewer than 53 children to school and is fitted with seatbelts and three children under 14 choose to share a double seat, who is responsible? The operator has provided sufficient seats so he cannot be liable. The Cheshire Constabulary by letter of 7 June says: "It is my understanding at the moment that a driver is responsible to ensure that, where a seatbelt is

available to a young person, the seatbelt is used." It also says the driver would be reported and it would be up to the courts to decide if it were unreasonable for the driver to be held responsible.

This conflicts with a reply from Steven Norris, by letter dated 30 November 1995, in which he states: "I would not expect the drivers of coaches to take responsibility for children under the age of 14, and no such requirement has been introduced."

Since it is clear a child under 14 cannot be prosecuted for the offence of sharing a seat, the law becomes unenforceable and is "an ass." Since it is abundantly clear that home-to-school transport by coach will not be made safer and may even be more dangerous where belts are fitted and, given there are many loopholes in the law and much of it is unenforceable, Steven Norris should withdraw this secondary legislation, which has never been put before Parliament, now.

As the police seem to think the 1985 Transport Act regarding "local services" means all services within 15 miles of the school may be exempt from the seatbelt legislation, it will leave very few vehicles having to comply with the new laws.

Even some of our county councils have now come to realise the flaws in the new legislation and are stipulating buses and not coaches when asking for tenders for home-to-school services.

They have realised the new rules makes the carrying capacity of buses greater than that of coaches and, therefore, cheaper. My own survey of over 800 customers shows that over 96 per cent were happy with the way

Write to: The Editor
Coach and Bus Week
EMAP Automotive Publishing
Wentworth House
Wentworth Street
Peterborough PE1 1DS
or fax 01733 467154



Keep those letters rolling in. If requested, we will publish them anonymously, but always include your full name (ie first name and surname), address and telephone number



Letter of the week wins a Corgi Classics model bus

things were and do not want seatbelts in the coaches. Where coaches have been fitted with the belts I find that non-use of them currently stands at 100 per cent, and many of the over 14-year-old pupils, when asked, say they will not wear the belts even if the law changes to make the wearing compulsory.

How can the increased costs due to provision of the new laws be justified if they do no more than "re-assure" the public — the word used by Steven Norris?

The public should be told the truth and not treated by this Government as children who need to be told what is good for them. Most parents are very competent adults and, given the truth, can make a judgement for themselves and do not need to be dictated to by a minister.

Raymond Maddock
Mecca Transport
Macclesfield
Cheshire

Airbus the biggest

From David Humphrey

You reported (*CBW*, 28 June) the introduction of fully-accessible buses on Brighton's route 49, claiming it is now Britain's biggest commercial accessible bus service, with 15 buses.

While not wishing to detract from the good work being done by Brighton, I must point out that London United's Airbus service between Heathrow and Central London is still the biggest commercial accessible bus service in the country, with 19 fully-accessible double deckers.

Airbus has been fully accessible since 1987, and is now on its second generation of accessible vehicles with new coach-seated

air-conditioned Alexander Royale Olympians.

I think I am also right in saying London United is still the largest operator of accessible bus services in Great Britain, with 37 fully-accessible buses running on mainstream regular frequency bus routes.

I am just putting the record straight.

David Humphrey
London United Busways
Twickenham
Middlesex

Bikes on the buses

From John Donald

I would like to ask about the legality of bicycles being carried recently on a London

General Metrobus from Clapham Junction. The bike blocked the emergency exit in the lower saloon,

This was a regular service bus and I was surprised the driver allowed it on board. As a bus passenger I feel my safety jeopardised by the emergency exit being blocked.

I have also experienced bikes blocking gangways on railway contract buses in the south (not recently I may add), where I felt my safety compromised, blocking my exit in an emergency.

Are there any laws about blocking entrances, exits, and aisles with items other than passengers, for whom the bus is actually designed?

John Donald
Wandsworth
London

CBW Coach Industry Awards

— a message from the editor

Dear Reader

The protracted postal dispute is putting an added burden on your business at what is already a very busy time of year and making it very difficult for you to guarantee hitting the deadline for entries for the 1996/7 Coach Industry Awards.

Consequently, if you have not already submitted you entry, I invite you use the sim-

plified fax entry form printed below.

Entry this year is by self-nomination - ie you have to enter yourself, and I would like to remind you that all entries must be received by the *Coach and Bus Week* offices by 31 July. There are 21 categories for you to choose from and you should note that supporting evidence is required ready for the judges first meeting on 8 August.

An entry form was enclosed with the

Coach and Bus Week issue dated 8 June, and this can still be used.

REMEMBER. IF YOU DON'T ENTER YOU CAN'T WIN.

Good Luck

Mike Morgan
Editor

Coach and Bus Week

FAX ENTRY FORM +++ FAX ENTRY FORM +++ FAX ENTRY FORM +++ FAX ENTRY FORM +++

The 1996 Coach Industry Awards



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☐ 13. Customer Service Awards

☐ 14. Coach Tour Programme of the Year

☐ 15. Day Excursion Programme of the Year

☐ 16. Coach Operator Brochure

☐ 17. Fleet Livery of the Year

☐ 18. Individual Livery of the Year

☐ 19. Dealership of the Year

☐ 20. Innovation Award

☐ 21. Marketing Campaign of the Year

Please enclose your supporting evidence using up to two sides of A4 paper plus appropriate photographs and/or brochures

FAX ENTRY FORMS to Mike Morgan on 01733 467154

or post them to me at *CBW*, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough, PE1 1DS.

Do not hesitate to give me a ring if you require further information on 01733 467139



Providing space for wheelchairs guarantees that disabled passengers have better access to public transport

High times for low-floor

Will operators be forced to change to accessible transport, or will they grasp the nettle of opportunity? Mark Williams reports

THE drive towards accessible transport is something no operator can afford to ignore. As increasing numbers of wheelchair-accessible, low-floor buses reach London and the provinces, passengers and local authorities are beginning to expect provision not only for the disabled but for those 'handicapped' by having to push baby buggies or cart around bags of shopping.

It's not a move driven purely by European legislation, though upcoming law is certainly worth anticipating; accessible transport provision has more recently been driven by consumer demand, as the disabled themselves become aware of the freedom offered to them by suitably-equipped public transport.

If we were to listen to many councils, we'd be led to believe there are hordes of dissatisfied wheelchair-bound passengers itching to board buses. Nothing could be further from the truth, which is why members of a recent fact-finding mission to Brussels, organised by the Confederation of Passenger Transport, were gratified to discover that in Europe, where wheelchair bus access has been available for some time, our EU partners have a very realistic view of accessibility. Providing the space for a wheelchair or perhaps two doesn't guarantee it will be filled more than once in a blue moon... but it guarantees that disabled passengers won't be turned away from what is supposed to be a 'public' service.

We're years away from providing any kind of integrated service for the disabled but, as London's low-floors come on stream, demand for the tradi-

tional dial-a-ride schemes in the city is bound to fall. Indeed, a recent council conference in Bristol looked at this issue in detail, as not only local authorities but operators report that demand for dial-a-ride has increased but the funding available has, at best, been pegged. In many cases, councils may be able to cut costs by introducing accessible, low-floor transport on their subsidised routes, in the hope that able-bodied passenger demand may eventually enable such routes to go commercial. So often in bussing, the passengers follow the vehicles.

But the low-floor, accessible bus isn't only about serving the disabled; it's also about satisfying the needs of young mothers, elderly ladies and, far more importantly, selling the notion of public transport to a wider audience.

Talk to Thorpes, who recently began running London Transport's Stationlink service with Optare Excels — they report not only a good reaction from the public, but a reaction which dispels the notion that Joe Public won't miss what he hasn't got. If you want bus services to appeal to the mass of car owners, who've experienced the best of Europe's public transport, you may have to provide what they want to see, not what they expect to see.

Above all, operators large and small should now be looking for opportunities to promote accessible bus services in any area where a long-term contract price could absorb some of the capital cost, or where short-term pilot schemes can be based on hired low-floor or converted vehicles. By presenting such options to local authorities whenever possible, as Cowie has done in London, operators can pre-empt panic later.

● **Turn to the following pages for more information about accessible public transport**



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One-step entrance: now regarded as essential for improved passenger access

Brighton Blue Bus chose Plaxton-bodied Dennis Darts for its remarkable intensive commercial low-floor bus service. Mike Morgan put one of the 15 accessible Darts to the test

Step on to the main attraction

BRIGHTON'S 49ers are a fleet of 15 low-floor buses which have revolutionised public transport on the Sussex coast. When Brighton Blue Buses originally hatched the idea of converting its busiest and most profitable route from double-deck to midibus it lacked one thing - the right vehicle for the job.

The concept was controversial and needed something special to add appeal to the passengers. The cross-town 49 was already high-frequency and its double-deck capacity met peak demand.

However, the Atlanteans which pounded up and down the demanding cross-town route were ageing, consumed 6.44 mpg and there was an irritating incidence of vandalism on the top decks.

Meanwhile, it had not gone unnoticed from the company's head office windows on Lewis Road that, while the loading figures pointed to a need for 70-plus seats, the reality during the day was that the top deck was unpopular.

But new buses are a major investment which takes on significant proportions when it requires the

replacement of the entire complement of buses on such a route. However, the Brighton bosses grasped the nettle last October when the low-floor version of the Dennis Dart was unveiled.

Already popular in the Brighton fleet, the Dart midibus had taken on a new lease of life as the cost-effective super-midi which could do the work of a full-size bus ...and it was low-floor, providing the one-step entrance which is widely regarded as essential for improved passenger access.

Managing director Richard Clark was already ahead of the game when CBW visited Scarborough for a preview of the first Plaxton-bodied SLFs. He'd been there, seen it and made the decision.

For around £84,000 he could buy a 10.6-metre low-floor bus. It was not only in excess of £20,000 cheaper and more fuel efficient than a double decker but had a major marketing advantage as the new generation of accessible bus.

But it was not just one Dart SLF that was to wing its way from Guildford to Brighton via the York-



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shire coast. A block order for 15 was placed, taking 12 double deckers out of the fleet. For £1.25 million Brighton was spending around the same as though it had bought deckers and was on target for a major service improvement.

Although fuel savings (9.95 mpg compared with 6.44 mpg) have more than compensated for route mileage increased by 20 per cent, it is doubtful that the impact of the change could have been fully predicted.

Mr Clark and his colleagues took full advantage of the marketing opportunities presented by doing an industry first. In advance of the 26 May launch, the buses were lined up on Madeira Drive and radio/TV interviews given.

Further photo-shots produced pictures for the new timetable designed, along with the 49ers branding, by Ray Stenning of Best Impressions.

Prominent on vehicles and publicity is the slogan that says it all: "Kiddies in buggies, shoppers with trolleys, commuters in a hurry ...the bus for everyone." It was a launch that instantly caught the eye of the *CBW* news team and prompted arrangements for this in-service road test.

Jumping on the low-floor bandwagon, let alone setting the trend with Britain's first high-frequency commercial service, is a noble initiative but does it pay dividends? Surely the talk of extra passenger generation is more a case of abstraction from other services and aren't those low-floor buses a gimmick?

There's only one way to cast aside any doubts and that is to spend a day at the seaside to experience life on the 49 at first hand. Consequently, after giving a few weeks for any teething troubles to be sorted out and given time for the service to settle down, I was allocated a turn behind the wheel.

Driving impressions

The 49 is a cross-town service linking Portslade in the west with East Moulsecoomb. First bus is at 5.35 am and the last trip runs in at 11.17 pm - or, as the timetable explains: "early to late."

Frequency builds up to more than six buses an hour throughout the day and a round trip is timetabled to take around 80 minutes, including five minutes layover at Portslade Station and either two or three minutes at the other end.

Brighton has more than its fair share of congestion - particularly during mid-Summer when the foreign students descend on the town in their thousands. Because the 49 goes through the heart of this thriving centre - Old Steine, Churchill Square, Palmeira Square and Hove - this is the sharp end of the serious business of running buses.

When the Pointer/Dart SLF made its debut, Plaxton sales and marketing director David Quainton said the 10.6-metre version was the "wild card" in the pack. With low-floor body seating up to 44 passengers (Brighton went for 39 plus wheelchair space) and a host of chassis improvements, including air suspension, the 145 bhp-powered Dart SLF is lighter, more fuel efficient, shorter, narrower and cheaper than a full-size bus.

As the Moulsecoomb-bound 11.26 pm departure awaited my pleasure outside the Blue Bus head office it was clear that, being longer and lower than a conventional Pointer/Dart, it looked every inch a big bus.

Wayfarer module installed and chief inspector at my shoulder I headed for the outer terminus. As all passengers were alighting it was an ideal time to become re-acquainted with the Dart controls.

It was also the opportunity to experience the different performance from Euro 2 engine and ride characteristics of the revised suspension. And for those familiar with the lively ride and performance of the standard Dart, this new bus is a revelation.

In what must be the busman's equivalent of Murphy's

Law, most bus stops are located close to a sunken drain gully or pot hole, ensuring that a suitably smooth stop is normally impossible. However, the Dart suspension absorbed all the sharp shocks. It was a delight.

Everything about the bus is smoother. The Dart in this form has come of age.

The driveline displayed very refined qualities. There's more bottom-end grunt from the Euro 2 engine and the Allison gearbox goes about its work in a much more discreet way than I remember.

For an explanation I turned to Dennis marketing director, Roger Heard, who said the Telma 5750 retarder was lighter, smaller and more powerful. Consequently there was less inertia on the driveshaft.

However, there's a combination of factors contributing to this new level of Dart refinement: longer wheelbase; 6,833 kg ULW, and the suspension. There's no denying that the sum of the whole is that the SLF is better by far. It's an observation endorsed by Brighton Blue Bus drivers and workshop foreman, Derek Beck.

Operations manager and director Peter Salvage says drivers allocated to other routes want to drive the new Darts - due in no small part to the improved design of the Plaxton cab which is now more spacious and, like the rest of the



Route 49 passengers have 'adopted' the new buses

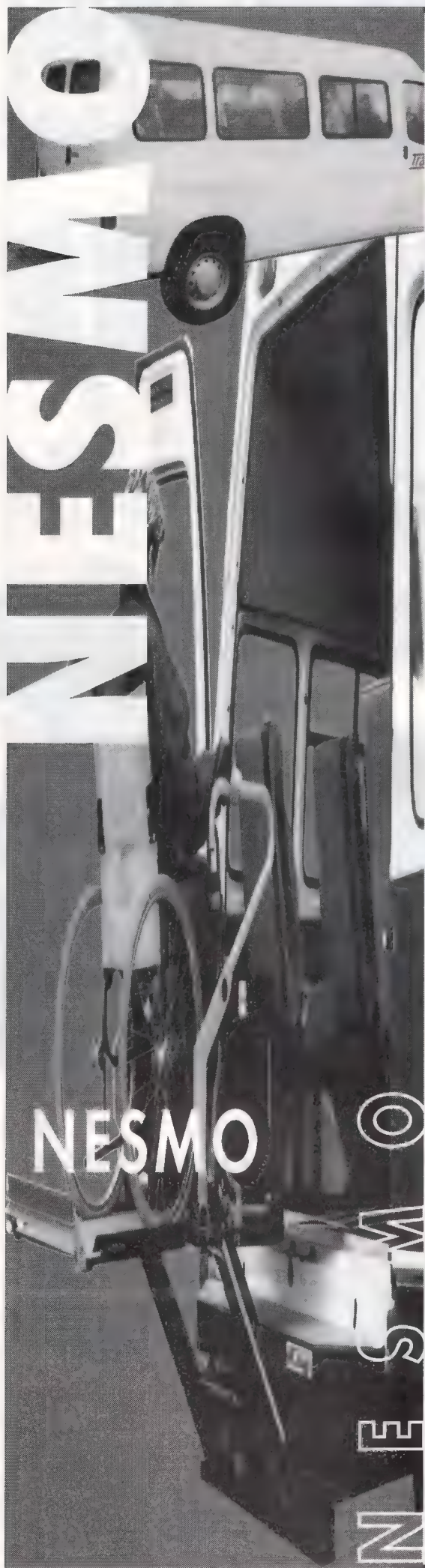
body, displays a higher standard of finish.

There are only two small niggles concerning this very comfortable working environment - possibly three:

- While the right-hand layout of gear selector, door control, suspension lowerer and handbrake is very logical, it places the handbrake too far back. *CBW* is assured that Plaxton is moving everything forward by around four centimetres
- The new Dennis Dash has a very comprehensive set of warning lights. However, as a consequence of the SLF driver sitting lower in relation to the windscreen, its main instruments and some of its other displays are partially obscured by the steering wheel and some teething troubles with the first production batch result in the warning to 'stop the bus' coming on unnecessarily. Dennis told *CBW* it has this problem sorted
- I was surprised by the very high 44 cm step out of the cab. If access is so easy for the passengers, why can't it be easier for the driver?

Passenger impressions

Bus drivers the world over know passengers are frequently miserable and are quick to complain, so what a



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pleasant surprise coming face to face with smiling faces and cheerful greetings.

The growing band of the route's regulars have adopted these buses as their own. Planning manager Neil McQuire says loadings on the 49 route are up by 10 per cent and operations manager Peter Salvage says the service has been victim of its own success.

Complaints are rolling in from those parts of town not served by the 49 with other Blue Bus customers demanding the same type of vehicle on their local service.

It's a nice problem to have and makes a change from dealing with the result of damage caused when a certain section of the travelling public find alternative entertainment on their trips into town.

Even when busy — and the 49 is busy throughout the day — all passenger movements can be monitored easily on this 10.6-metre bus because the driver has ideally positioned mirrors and the cab seat is at a perfect height for supervising loading and unloading.

It's a size and type of bus which encourages good relationships between driver and customer and, incidentally, is the right size for negotiating roads on housing estates seriously narrowed by endless rows of parked cars.

In the town centre where a clear approach to bus stops cannot be guaranteed, the driver has a fighting chance of tucking the bus into the stop without leaving the back end vulnerable to damage from passing traffic.

For the passenger, the 10.6-metre Pointer/Dart's compact, yet spacious, dimensions extend its appeal. The interior is virtually the same as a full-size bus and it can get close enough to bus stops to enable mothers with push-chairs to get on and off with ease.

One dominant memory of this test is the natural frequency with which the target users took advantage of the bus. "Kiddies in buggies, shoppers with trolleys, commuters in a hurry..." Yes, they are all using the 49 as part of their normal travel arrangements.

There are no ramps on the Brighton SLFs but drivers are encouraged to lower the front suspension at every stop. Once into the routine, pressing the kneel button is as natural as opening the door. The handbrake must be applied first so individual passengers hopping on or off are often too quick to make kneeling worthwhile but most bus stops on the 49 had sufficient customers to fully justify the ritual. After all, it only takes eight seconds and they really do appreciate it as part of the service. Since handbrake release also raises the suspension, movement away from bus stops is not impeded.

Surprisingly the thorny issue of access to bus stops was not a big problem during the test. Delivery vans, parked cars, taxis, competing buses, and stray pedestrians all did their best to make life difficult but, in most cases, it was possible to get within 15 centimetres of the kerb.

Indeed, there are so many buses using Western Road and North Street in the town centre that it is difficult to see how special arrangements for wheelchair-accessible buses could be successfully managed — particularly as this type of vehicle becomes more common.

However, the greatest difficulty approaching stops is on the East Moulsecoomb estate and the local council has experimented at one stop by building the pavement out into the road. Consequently a bus picking up passengers blocks the flow of traffic.

Also it is built to the height of the SLF's first step with a view to walk-on walk-off loading — highly commendable but very vulnerable, judging by the scars on the front near-side lower corner on all the buses used on the route.



Pointer/Dart wins passengers, cuts costs

Verdict

While the jury may still be out on the necessity for ramps on low-floor buses and the design of bus stops along the route, there is now no question that this type of bus is here to stay.

Brighton Blue Buses needed the right bus to convert its dream for a fully-accessible, high-frequency service into reality. The Pointer/Dart SLF came along at the right time and its success is there for all to see.

Drivers are sold on the new buses, passengers are voting with their fares and the company is getting complaints from passengers along those routes not serviced by the new buses.

For those who are still in doubt about the future of local bus services a visit to Brighton is highly recommended. You will come away asking yourself why it hasn't been done before. **CBW**

SPECIFICATION

Chassis:	Dennis Dart-10.6 metre
Body:	Plaxton Pointer - 39 seats plus 16 standees
Price:	£84,000
Engine:	turbo-charged six-cylinder Euro 2 Cummins B
Power:	145 bhp (107 kW) @ 2,500 rpm
Torque:	369 Lbf ft (500 Nm) @ 1,500 rpm
Gearbox:	Allison AT545 four-speed automatic
Steering:	ZF 8095 power assisted - 45 cm soft feel wheel
Brakes:	Front: drums Rear: drums Handbrake: spring release
Retarder:	Telma 5750 - four stages operated by foot brake
Suspension:	full air with 85 mm front kneel
Drive axle:	Eaton 08-18 single reduction hypoid axle - ratio 4.88:1
Tyres:	245/70R x 19.5

DIMENSIONS

Length:	10.6 metres
Width:	2.4 metres
Height:	3 metres
Wheelbase:	5.805 metres
Unladen weight:	6,833 kg
GVW:	12,000 kg

PERFORMANCE

Acceleration:	0-30 mph - 10.5 secs
Fuel economy:	Brighton's average consumption - 9.95 mpg
Noise levels at 40 mph:	cab - 76 dB(A), saloon rear - 74 dB(A)

Powered ramp specially for low-floors



Deans' managing director Derrick Skidmore (right) at the presentation of Deans' BSI 9001 certificate with quality manager Les Allen and divisional director south east region BSI quality assurance (centre).

LONG-established manufacturer Deans Powered Doors of Beverley have launched a powered ramp — designed specifically with the low-floor bus market in mind (CBW, 14 June).

The Powerleaf Power Hinged Access Ramp has safety features which:

- Will not allow it to be used when the bus doors are closed
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If the space is obstructed, the ramp halts its movement, but when space is made available, continues to unfold.

The very first of the new ramps has already been installed on a citybus for Midland Red West, running in Bridgnorth, Shrewsbury and Ludlow.

"The ramp is relatively inexpensive to buy and easy to install and maintain," says Malcolm Phillips, Deans' sales director.

"It drops into an area of 65 cm by 100 cm in the bus floor and is only six cm deep. Seven screws and bolts are all that's needed to fit it, and the controls connector simply plugs in."

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Platform solves problem

THE technical problems associated with fitting wheelchair lifts to coaches have been solved by Ricon with a hydraulic-powered platform which has 65 inches of travel, ground to coach floor.

Going into production at its Manchester factory, the lift is side mounted, stowing in the saloon floor of the coach after use. It has a massive range of safety features, including handrails, anti-roll

stops, double-locking bridge plate and a foolproof, single centre-mounted ram.

Operated from a pendant hand control, the automatic lift has a clutch-operated drive to prevent power pack overload, and a double in-line fuse to protect the wiring harness fully. The first off the line will be reaching the market in August.

More details from Ricon on 0161 274 3711, fax 0161 274 3706

Ultra-lightweight seating

A JOINT development between seat designer Formflex and seat tracking specialist Unwin has resulted in an ultra-lightweight minibus seating system which is under test.

Using a special inner frame and suspension system, Formflex — a division of automotive group Leggett & Platt — has managed to get the all-up weight of the new design to 12.5 kg. It's the result of a £100,000 R and D programme at the company's Pullmaflex factory in Ammanford, South Wales, and will bring a full range of revolutionary seating to

the bus market by 1999.

"We at Formflex believe that a controlled programme of development into safer seats for minibuses and coaches is long overdue," said Formflex designer Peter Anderson.

"With our ongoing policy of advancing technology, the intention is to offer safe, light and economical frames and suspension systems which will impact the market and set new standards of passenger safety."

Formflex Seat Frames can be reached on 01269 592301



High floors present problems for chair lifts

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At the cutting edge

RATCLIFF has been at the cutting edge of wheelchair lifts for some 32 years, and isn't planning on letting off the pressure.

The company set up in Stoke Newington, but moved head office to Welwyn Garden City in 1970, and set up its Leeds branch a year later. And during that time, it has kept the pressure not only on its sales team but on its development office.

The result is one of the best-known names in tail lifts... a firm which has specialised in the welfare market but which has supplied numerous minibus convertors and operators with serviceable lifts.

The emphasis is on 'serviceable.' Ratcliff opened a dedicated parts centre in Leeds last April, and prides itself in preven-

tative maintenance.

One of its latest coups has been the new, automatic RUL300A tail lift - an underfloor lift which has a simple two-button control pad which not only takes the lift up and down but which also stows the lift after use. After extensive testing, it has been installed in two minibuses for Bristol's Phoenix NHS Trust.

Phoenix runs 58 vehicles, 21 of which are equipped with tail lifts, and which says Ratcliff is its first choice. Ratcliff lifts have also been installed by London



Ratcliff is the name on tail-lifts throughout the UK

United Airbus service for the last decade.

Ratcliff Tail Lifts is on 01707 325571, fax 01707 327752

Future looks bright

CRYSTALS Coaches of Dartford has managed to retain one mobility bus contract and win another from London Transport Buses.

The operator retains Bexley and Greenwich routes, and has wrested Bromley, Lewisham and Southwark from the grasp of Selkent for the new tender, which begins early in 1997. It will be investing in new buses for the job.

Comprehensive range of products

TAKE a look around the average DPTAC-equipped bus, and chances are, you'll be looking at a Griptone product.

Its UK exclusive is a palm-press bell push, fitted to Plaxton buses among other vehicles.

Designed with the aid of London's Accessible Vehicle Unit, the unit uses high-contrast ABS plastic parts, including a sim-

ple, clip-in button to gain access to the contact plates and fixing screws.

But the Griptone range of products doesn't end there.

It includes Bus Stopping signs, marker lights, step lights and a booster socket.

Contact Griptone, on 0161 727 9011, fax 0161 727 9021, for further details

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PROBLEM

While vehicle manufacturers are introducing much improved safety and seat belt systems to new mini-buses, the question remains - what about the thousands of vehicles already on the road?

Belts attached direct to seats, and seats simply bolted to the floor are not enough.

SOLUTION - RETRO-FIT

The retro-fit Safety Devices Mini-Bus Safety System is the most positive move yet to reduce injury.

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- Anchorage points for lap and diagonal seat belts for all passengers including centre seats.
- Additional passenger protection in roll-over accident situations.

ENGINEERING

Safety Devices are one of the world's leading manufacturers of safety equipment for motor sport. The System is designed and manufactured to the same high standards as the company's roll-over cages for race and rally cars.

The System has been tested at MIRA (Motor Industry Research Association) and passed the M2 standard for seat belt fitting points. This meets the 76-115-EEC (amended 90-629-EEC) standard and conforms to ECE14 recommendation for seat belt anchorages.

AVAILABILITY

In production now for 12-seat, high-roof versions of the Mk 3 (VE6) Ford Transit. 15 seat Transit and other makes of mini-bus will be available in the near future.



USER FRIENDLY

A specially developed high density padding for fitting on the cage, and a high performance leisure roof rack which mounts through the roof to the System are available.

FITTING

Installation is by five approved regional fitting centres at a cost of £1,950 (excl VAT) including all seat belts.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Andrew Spence,
Safety Devices, Regal Drive, Soham, Cambridge CB7 5BE.
Tel: 01353 624624. Fax: 01353 624824.

**Safety
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TECHNOLOGY OF PROTECTION

Grey-Green converting

COWIE Grey-Green is to convert two of its routes to low-floor buses in Spring, as London Transport Buses steps up its accessibility programme.

Routes 20 Walthamstow-Debden and 167 Ilford-Debden are heavily used by young mothers and elderly with shopping trolleys, says LTB, hence the upgrade. Cowie Grey-Green held the previous contract, and has won the latest in tendering having offered LTB the low-floor option.

So far, the order for new buses hasn't been placed, but the likely choice is for 17 9.8-metre Dennis Dart SLFs with Alexander bodywork. The extra cost? Less

of an issue than you might think, says Cowie's London commercial director Mark Yexley. "Low-floor is now a proven way of attracting more passengers," said Mr Yexley. "For that simple, commercial reason we have taken the step of offering LTB the option of low-floor in tendering rounds, and they are taking it."

"County Bus is converting routes 395, 370 and 373 to low-floor on the same basis. Now that the price premium has dropped, it's nothing like as significant as in the early days of low-floor, and furthermore, there's a better range to choose from."



Grey-Green: 'London ready for low-floor'

Q Straint restraint system 'still the best'

Q STRAINT's original wheelchair restraint system is still the best, says the firm, despite increasing demand for tracking-based belts and harnesses.

The simple but effective original relies on 'floor pockets' into which the foolproof harness plugs to prevent disabled passengers being injured even in frontal impacts. Its advantage is that it can be installed simply

and quickly by the operator around existing track, is unobtrusive, keeps the vehicle's seating arrangement flexible, and uses the passenger's own wheelchair.

A full kit for a single wheelchair restraint is around £240 complete, including a free training video and training material so everyone from fitters to drivers knows the principles. It's part of Q Straint's commit-

ment to total service...including full back-up for its systems throughout the life of the fitting.

As with all seating fixtures which incorporate belts, it needs to be braced heavily on wooden floors but, after fitment, can be mastered in a couple of minutes by any driver.

Details from Q Straint on 01227 773035, fax 01227 770035 **CBW**



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And it's not only people in wheelchairs who will benefit from the Powerleaf ramp; adults with pushchairs, and elderly people who have difficulty getting onto a bus, will all find travelling a much more pleasant experience.

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SCANIA

Irizar Centurys Applebys' choice

DELIVERY of a pair of two-axle Scania Centurys to Applebys was preceded by two tri-axle coaches from the same source.

All four were delivered this season as Applebys, the Lincolnshire-based operator whose fleet approaches some 90 vehicles, continues to place repeat orders for the Irizar/Scania combination.

The two-axle Centurys are based on Scania

K113CRB underframe with seven-speed Comfort Shift gearbox, Telma retarder and aluminium wheels.

Irizar's bodywork is fitted with 49 reclining seats plus courier. All seats have seatbelts.

In addition the specification includes: air conditioning; toilet; video/monitor; fridge; drinks machine; aircraft-type locker doors; footrests; radio/PA/cassette; and CD player.

MOSELEY

First foreign vehicles for Whippet

WHIPPET of Fenstanton turned to Moseley for its first foreign-bodied coaches.

The Cambridgeshire-based company, which runs a mix of coach and bus operations from its Fenstanton garage on the A14 near Cambridge, has bought two Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10Ms. It says the two coaches have not stopped working since arriving from the Moseley dealership.

They replace a pair of DAF-chassied coaches and are painted in



a revised version of the two-tone blue and cream Go Whippet livery.

Currently busy on tour work,

the Van Hools will be available for the company's private-hire and express coach operations.

HUGHES DAF

Van Hool the fav

Truemans stay manufacturer and high-floor

TRUEMANS Travel of Camberley replaced a third of its six-vehicle fleet when it took two new coaches from Hughes DAF.

Out goes a 1989 Van Hool SH exec on Scania underframe and another Van Hool on Volvo B10M

BOVA

Futuras g in expans

BARNESLEY-based Globe Coaches has expanded its coach fleet with the addition of two Bova Futura Express coaches, one of which has been retrofitted with a toilet, video and drinks machine for longer distance tours.

The company, which operated local buses in the area until their sale to Yorkshire Traction last Autumn, has slimmed down

OPTARE

First single deckers of '96

HULL-based East Yorkshire Motor Services will have the first of its 1996 single-deck orders with the delivery of eight Mercedes-Benz 0405 Optare Prisms for city services.

Operating out of Hedon Road depot, the vehicles will be allocated to the Greatfield route, when delivery is complete. Currently two Prisms are operating the Scarborough park-and-ride service until Plaxton-bodied Dennis SLF Darts come in late August, with two more due to enter service on 1

August with P registrations.

In addition to Prisms and Pointers, East Yorkshire is expecting the first Optare Excels to enter service in Yorkshire, and these should arrive in early Autumn.

EYMS chairman Peter Shipp said that, after the Hull bus wars, the company had some catching up to do on its fleet replacement programme. "This year we have concentrated on single deckers, because you can buy more vehicles."





ol still ourite

s with Belgian
also chooses EOS
executive

by Mike Morgan

is destined to leave Truemans at the end of the season.

In comes an EOS 90 to replace the Scania, and this Van Hool-bodied DAF SB3000 53-seater



takes over the duties of the Volvo.

Tours manager Mike Pearson said the company wanted to stay with Van Hool products because it had good experience of the Belgian manufacturer. However, when it came to a choice of high-floor exec

with toilet and ample luggage space, its choice was limited to the EOS.

Preference would have been given to another Acron after very successfully running one of the rare Cummins-engined 1990 examples, but that model is no longer avail-

able in the UK.

Nevertheless, Mr Pearson confirmed customer reaction had been very favourable. The Truemans EOS has 46 seats, rear toilet and servery. Both new coaches have air-conditioning.

o 'Global' on drive

its fleet to around 20 vehicles of which 10 are front-line coaches less than 10 years old.

The Bovas, which are the first new coaches purchased by Globe for six years, feature the lower height bodywork, and are powered by 8.27-litre Cummins C series engines and an automatic ZF5HP 500 gearbox. Both vehicles have reclining seats with 49 and 53 seats respectively.



DENNIS

Felix stays with Plaxton

LONG-standing Derbyshire independent coach and bus operator Felix of Ilkeston has maintained its vehicle replacement programme with the purchase of Dennis vehicles.

Felix runs its own holiday tours programme and has again turned to the Plaxton Premiere 320/Dennis Javelin combination for its latest coach.

Although finished in dealer white, instead of the traditional Felix red/maroon colours, the

Javelin, nevertheless, carries the famous cat logo adopted by the family-run business after a pre-war cartoon film about a cat named Felix.

The Javelin is similar in specification to a coach bought last year and it joins a fleet which contains the company's only Dennis service bus. This Optare-bodied Dennis Lance is a former demonstrator which is used on service 12 from Ilkeston to Derby.

CBW



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1991 H DAF SB2305 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R/Toilet
1990 G MB230LB Van Hool Alizee 'SH', 53R/Toilet
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1990 G DAF SB3000 Van Hool 'H', 49/Toilet
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1990 G DAF DHTD Duple 320, 57R
1989 G SCANIA K113 Van Hool Alizee 'SH', 49R/Toilet
1989 F DAF MB230 Van Hool Alizee 'SH', 53R/Toilet
1989 PP BOVA FUTURA FHD, 49R/Toilet
1989 SB3000 Plaxton 3500, 51/Toilet
1988 VOLVO B10M, Plaxton 3500, 49R/Toilet
1988 PP BOVA FUTURA FHD, 49R/Toilet
1988 E DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 51R/Toilet
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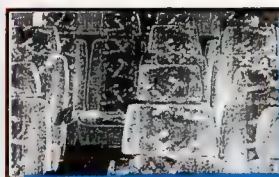
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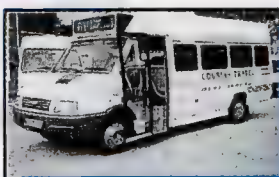
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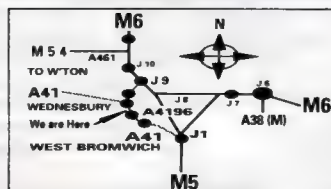
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63943/SET



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Allison 4 speed auto box, very well
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1983 VOLVO B10M Van Hool Alizee, 49 reclining seats, courier seat, centre sunken toilet, continental door, wiring for video.

1979 DAF DKL, 11 metre Plaxton Supreme IV, 53 Plaxton seats, power door.

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- 1978 YMT SUPREME**, 53 fawn seats. Tested Oct '97
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49/53 recliners, grey/red moquette, centre sunken demountable toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, water boiler, wired TV/video, power entrance door, finished white/rose/gold.

M.O.T. FEBRUARY 1997

1993 BOVA FUTURA FHD 12.290 INTEGRAL 12M

51/55 seats, grey/red moquette, centre sunken demountable toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, water boiler, wired TV/video, power entrance door, finished all white.

M.O.T. FEBRUARY 1997

1993 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PREMIERE 350 12M

53 recliners, red/black stripe moquette, rear continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, courier seat, power entrance door, finished white/orange.

M.O.T. SEPTEMBER 1996

1993 DENNIS JAVELIN CAETANO ALGARVE II 12M

53 recliners, brown/beige moquette, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, power entrance door, finished duo blue.

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M.O.T. MARCH 1997

1990 VOLVO B10MT (Tandem) VAN HOOL ALIZEE-SH 12M

49 recliners, brown/orange moquette, rear sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows with blinds, courier seat, water boiler, fridge, driver's sleeping berth, wired TV/video, power entrance door, finished white/primrose/orange.

M.O.T. MARCH 1997

1989 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M

52 recliners, brown/orange moquette, courier seat, tinted side windows, power entrance door, finished all white.

M.O.T. FEBRUARY 1997

1989 SCANIA K93 DUPL 320 12M

55 seats, grey/orange moquette, tinted side windows, power entrance door, finished all white.

M.O.T. NOVEMBER 1996

1989 LEYLAND TIGER 260 DUPL 320 12M

53 recliners, brown/orange moquette, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, power entrance door, TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, finished all white.

M.O.T. MARCH 1997

1989 LEYLAND TIGER (Cummins 250) DUPL 320 12M

57 seats, red moquette, tinted side windows, TELMA retarder, power entrance door, finished cream/red/orange.

M.O.T. DECEMBER 1996

1988 LEYLAND TIGER 260 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M

49 recliners, red/grey moquette, sunken toilet O/S rear, continental door, double glazed side windows, curtains, courier seat, water boiler, power entrance door, finished cream/grey.

M.O.T. JANUARY 1997

1988 NEOPLAN SKYLINER (MERC. V10) double-deck

75 recliners, (57 upper saloon + 18 lower saloon) red/orange moquette, courier seat, water boiler, fridge, 2 tables, o/s rear toilet, wired TV/video, power entrance doors, finished metallic silver/ grey.

M.O.T. DECEMBER 1996

1986 DAF DKVL PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M

53 recliners, grey/blue moquette, courier seat, continental door, tinted side windows, TELMA retarder, power entrance door, finished all white. CHOICE OF 2

M.O.T. JANUARY 1997

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MERCEDES SPRINTER 412, 16+ wheelchair, **STOCK.**

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NEW TRANSIT 14, diesel, psv, **STOCK.**

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NEW DAF 16, high roof, PSV, power steering, turbo.

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NEW MERC 609, 24 or 6 w/chairs.

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90 TRANSIT LWB, petrol, 12 seat.

90 TRANSIT LWB, 12 seat diesel, PSV

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90 H TRANSIT, 16 diesel PSV, side door

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89 DAF BERKHOF, 75 seats, exec, d/deck, toilet, monitors, good trim, ready to work, tested.

89 TRANSIT, diesel, 14 PSV tested.

89 MERCEDES 208, 12 seat diesel.

88 DAF BERKHOF, 75 seat exec, toilet, TV, good trim to be sold with new test.

88 LEYLAND SWIFT, 32 coach + wheelchair lift

88 TRANSIT, 14 diesel, PSV.

88 MERCEDES 609, coach spec, 21 seats.

88 MERC 23, coach spec

88 TRANSIT 12, diesel, psv, swb.

88 TRANSIT, diesel, 11 psv, swb.

88 F MERCEDES 709, 21 seat, coach spec.

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84 VOLVO B10 BERKHOF, exec, 49, toilet, tv

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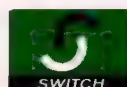
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1990 MERCEDES 709D Dormobile, 29 seats, 8 standees, DipTac spec, power door, long MoT. Choice of 4.
1990 G MERCEDES TAZ-DUBRAVA, Mercedes 0303 engine, 53 recliners, power door, radio/PA, MoT April '97
1989 G SANOS-CHARISMA, Mercedes 0303 engine, 49/53 seats, toilet, power door, MoT November '96
1989 F MERCEDES, 24 coach seats, power door, luggage capacity, long MoTs. Choice of 2
1989 PEUGEOT TALBOT TRI-AXLE, 21 coach seats, power door, destination gear, all white exterior, new MoT, choice of 2.
1988 E MERCEDES 814, 29 seats, courier seat, large luggage capacity, power door, MoT December '96.
1986 BEDFORD YNV, 500 Turbo, Duple 320, 57 seats, radio/PA, power door, MoT September '96
1985 B LEYLAND TIGER 245, Duple Lazer II, semi-automatic, 53 seats, power door, long MoT
1982 Y BOVA EUROPA, DAF engine, 53 recliners, courier seat, power door, MoT June '97
1982 Y FORD 360 Turbo Duple Dominant, 8.5 metre, 35 seats, power door, MoT December '96.
1978 PP VOLVO B58 Jonckheere, 53 seats, power door, MoT October '96

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64120/VSG

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LEYLAND LEOPARD

1980 DUPLÉ DOMINANT 1 Phase II Express, 11m, 53 seats, test October.

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BEDFORD

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64211/BFS

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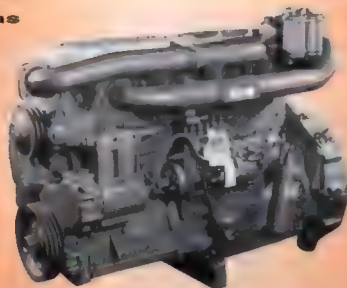
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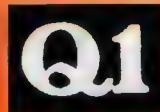
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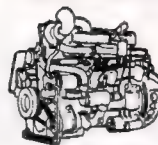
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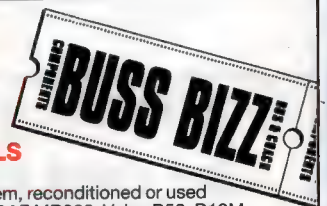
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57 Kingston - Streatham Hill

65 Kingston - Ealing Broadway

71 Kingston - Chessington

85 Kingston - Putney Bridge

127 Purley - Tooting Broadway

213 Kingston - Sutton

265 Tolworth - Putney Bridge

281 Tolworth - Hounslow

371 Kingston - Richmond

These routes will be tendered on the basis of net cost contracts.

371D Ham - Richmond

465 Kingston - Leatherhead

These routes will be tendered on the basis of gross cost contracts.

If you are interested and have already submitted your pre-qualification documents then you need take no further action at this stage.

However if you are interested and have not completed London Transport's pre-qualification system for bus service tendering then you must do so by 23rd August 1996 in order to receive invitations to tender for the above routes.

Pre-qualification documents are available by writing to:

Mr T Wynne

Buyer

London Transport Buses

172 Buckingham Palace Road

London SW1W 9TN

Telephone 0171 918 3812



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Strategic Services

Transport Planning Assistant

£13,581 – £17,625

(placing dependent on qualifications and experience)

In this role, you will assist in the development and implementation of transport policies by procurement of public transport services and infrastructure and by surveys, publicity and information. You will also be responsible for organising school transport provision in approximately half of the Council area.

Liaison with bus, rail and taxi operators and other agencies, including the Police and Health Boards is essential, therefore you must possess first class communication skills. In addition, you should have an HNC or equivalent, combined with relevant transport experience.

Applications for job share will be considered.

For further information please contact John Angell, Transport Planning Manager, Tel: (01324) 504820 or Stephen Bloomfield, Transport Planning Officer, Tel: (01324) 504723.

Application forms, quote Ref: SS003, are available from Personnel Services, Falkirk Council, Municipal Buildings, Falkirk FK1 5RS, Tel: (01324) 506226/8, to whom completed applications should be returned no later than Friday 16 August 1996.

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Falkirk Council

FLEET ENGINEER

Would you like the opportunity to be part of one of the largest bus operators in the North East of England?

Go-Ahead Gateshead and Northern General Transport, subsidiary companies of Go-Ahead Group PLC, who operate over 220 vehicles throughout County Durham and Tyne and Wear, have vacancies for FLEET ENGINEERS. One based in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, the other in Chester-le-Street, County Durham.

As Fleet Engineer you will be professionally responsible to the Operations Engineer for raising standards, improving productivity and maintaining budget expectations, but directly responsible to the company General Manager. You should be a qualified engineer having served a recognised apprenticeship and have at least two years supervisory experience, inclusive of discipline and recruitment.

A comprehensive knowledge of maintenance and health and safety requirements are essential, as is the ability to motivate staff to exceed the Department of Transport and Company standards in every area of the business. Computer literacy is desirable.

If you have the skills, commitment and experience to meet this challenge, please send a comprehensive CV to:

**Mr K. Carr, Director/General manager
The Go-Ahead Group PLC**

117 Queen Street, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 2UA
Closing date for application Monday 12 August, 1996, 1000 hours

64227/APP

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Computer Systems Manager

c. £25,000 pa Twickenham



London United seeks a Computer Systems Manager with bus company experience, to manage its day to day computer operations and to plan and implement strategy for cost effective use of computer systems for the future.

London United currently uses a variety of computer hardware and applications, including London Transport software on HP 3000 hardware and Meridian packages on a Unix network.

London United is owned by its management and employees following a successful buy-out from government ownership in 1994. London United is the major bus operator in South West London, operating 600 buses from seven sites in the area.

Applicants should set out their qualifications, experience and other relevant information in writing to:

Mr S. Lawes, Finance Director, London United Busways Limited, Wellington Road, Twickenham, TW2 5NX

64256/APP

Coach and Bus Week ending 27 July 1996

Say you saw it in **CBW**

▼ Coach

Wright's area sales manager

Move for former MTL London man

ROBERT Wright of Ballymena has appointed former MTL London man **Paul Beyer** area sales manager for the south-east of England.

Mr Beyer has 22 years of experience in the industry, served chiefly with London Transport and London Buses, but latterly with Metroliner and MTL. He has also sold buses for Northern Counties.

"We have enlarged our sales force to answer the increasing number of inquiries for our growing range of low-floor accessi-

by Mark Williams

ble buses," said Jack Kernohan, Wrights' sales director.



Beyer: experienced

▼ Training

Training the trainers...

BRITISH Bus is set to train its driving staff... having trained nearly 40 people (left) to train them! The Salisbury-based group set its stall out to get a company-wide driver training school in place within 12 months, and is now well on the way with this team of internal verifiers and assessors, who will test staff in the competence assessment



▼ Bus

Manning Stagecoach Portugal md

STAGECOACH Portugal has a new managing director, drafted in from his former occupation as deputy passenger transport officer for Buckinghamshire County Council. **Ian Manning** will report to **Roger Bowker**, currently Stagecoach East London's md, and responsible for restructuring the 120-bus system and the crumbling

Sintra tramway (CBW, 13 April). Currently, the buses operate in and around Sintra, Estoril and Cascais. The financial systems have been set up by Stagecoach East Midlands and Cambus finance director **Mike Clayton**, who will continue as finance director and company secretary of Stagecoach Portugal. **CBW**



The PSV industry's news weekly

Payment (please tick as appropriate)

Coach and Bus Week

	1 year	2 years	3 years
UK	£49.00	£88.00	£125.00
Eire/Europe 1 year	£92.00	Airmail 1 year	£124.00

Transit (Existing Coach and Bus Week Subscribers)

	1 year	2 years	3 years
UK	£72.00	£129.00	£183.00
Eire/Europe 1 year	£115.00	Airmail 1 year	£147.00

Coach and Bus Week and Transit (New Subscribers)

	1 year	2 years	3 years
UK	£121.00	£217.00	£308.00
Eire/Europe 1 year	£164.00	Airmail 1 year	£196.00

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

YOUR COMPANY DETAILS

1. What is your primary job title?

(Tick one only)

- Owner/Director ☐ 01
 Senior/General Manager ☐ 02
 Engineering/Service Manager ☐ 03
 Other (please specify) ☐ 04

2. What is your company's main business function?

- Bus Operator ☐ 01
 Coach Operator ☐ 05
 Coach & Bus Operator ☐ 02
 Local Government ☐ 03
 Other (please specify) ☐ 04

SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

Coach and Bus Week is the news weekly for coach and bus operators. Transit provides vital analysis of, and information on, the UK public transport scene every fortnight. Together they make an unbeatable and invaluable package. All annual subscription rates include delivery by first class post. It is important to fill out all parts of this form. NB: Transit is not available on subscription without Coach and Bus Week.

3. How many vehicles does your company own/operate?

(Tick all that apply)

- | | Buses | Coaches |
|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1-5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 01 | <input type="checkbox"/> 10 |
| 6-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 02 | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 |
| 11-15 | <input type="checkbox"/> 03 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12 |
| 16-25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 04 | <input type="checkbox"/> 13 |
| 26-39 | <input type="checkbox"/> 05 | <input type="checkbox"/> 14 |
| 40-100 | <input type="checkbox"/> 06 | <input type="checkbox"/> 15 |
| 101-400 | <input type="checkbox"/> 07 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 |
| 401-1000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 08 | <input type="checkbox"/> 17 |
| 1000+ | <input type="checkbox"/> 09 | <input type="checkbox"/> 18 |

4. Do you have responsibility for the recommendation/purchase and/or specification of the following?

(Tick all that apply)

- | | Pur | Spec | Rec |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Vehicles | <input type="checkbox"/> 01 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12 | <input type="checkbox"/> 23 |
| Parts/Spares | <input type="checkbox"/> 02 | <input type="checkbox"/> 13 | <input type="checkbox"/> 24 |
| Oil/Fuel | <input type="checkbox"/> 03 | <input type="checkbox"/> 14 | <input type="checkbox"/> 25 |
| Breakdown | <input type="checkbox"/> 04 | <input type="checkbox"/> 15 | <input type="checkbox"/> 26 |
| Insurance/Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> 05 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 | <input type="checkbox"/> 27 |
| Fuel Cards | <input type="checkbox"/> 06 | <input type="checkbox"/> 17 | <input type="checkbox"/> 28 |
| Training | <input type="checkbox"/> 07 | <input type="checkbox"/> 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 29 |
| Venue/Attraction Tickets | <input type="checkbox"/> 08 | <input type="checkbox"/> 19 | <input type="checkbox"/> 30 |
| Ferry Crossing | <input type="checkbox"/> 09 | <input type="checkbox"/> 20 | <input type="checkbox"/> 31 |
| Hotel Bookings | <input type="checkbox"/> 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 21 | <input type="checkbox"/> 32 |
| Theatre Tickets | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 | <input type="checkbox"/> 22 | <input type="checkbox"/> 33 |
| Other (please specify) | | | <input type="checkbox"/> 34 |

5. What type of work does your company undertake?

(Tick all that apply)

- Private Hire ☐ 01
 Day Excursions ☐ 02
 British Tours ☐ 03
 European Tours ☐ 04
 Local Government Contracts ☐ 05
 Emergency/Breakdown Services ☐ 06

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1994 L VOLVO B6 R/E MARSHALL BUS, 32 SEATS + 18 STANDEES
Exterior White, Interior Red, Driver Operated Door, Integral Retarder, Destination Gear, Pushchair Compartment and Twin Doors at Front. CHOICE OF SIMILAR VEHICLES.
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1992 K VOLVO B10M IKARUS, 49 RECLINING SEATS
Exterior Red and White, Interior Multi Coloured Moquette, Radio, PA, Cassette, Wiring for TV/Video, Front Wheel Discs, Driver Operated Door, ABS, Exhaust Brake, Side Locker, Toilet, Double Glazing, Curtains, Tinted Windows, Crew Seat, Hot Water Boiler and Fridge.
Ref: 7036

1992 J SCANIA K113 PREMIERE 350, 49 RECLINING SEATS
Exterior White, Blue & Orange, Interior Fawn Striped Moquette, Radio, PA, Stereo, Front Wheel Discs, Driver Operated Door, ABS, Telma, Side Locker, Toilet, Double Glazing, Tinted Windows, Curtains, Continental Door, Crew Seat, Crew Compartment, Soft Trim, Fridge,

Hot Water Boiler, Footrests, Wire for TV and Alloy Wheels.
Ref: 6668

1990 G LEYLAND TIGER (CUMMINS 290) PARAMOUNT 3500, 49 RECLINING SEATS

Exterior White, Interior Grey Striped Moquette, Radio, PA, Stereo, Driver Operated Door, Telma, Side Locker, Toilet, Double Glazing, Tinted Windows, Webasto, Curtains, Continental Door, Crew Seats, Crew Compartment, Soft Trim, Aircraft Lockers and Wiring for TV/Video.
Ref: 6574

1993 K DENNIS JAVELIN PREMIERE, 57 SEATS

Exterior Blue, White and Gold, Interior Grey Moquette, Radio, PA, Cassette, Front Wheel Discs, Driver Operated Door, Exhaust Brake, Side Locker, Double Glazing, Tinted Windows, Curtains, Crew Seat and Wiring for TV and Video.
Ref: 6645

1989 F MERCEDES 0303 RHS, 53 RECLINING SEATS

Exterior Red and Cream, Interior Red Moquette, Radio, PA, Cassette, Wheel Discs, Driver Operated Door, ABS, Exhaust Brake, Side Locker, Webasto, Tinted Windows, Blinds, Continental Door, Crew Seat and Air Conditioning. CHOICE OF VARIOUS SIMILAR VEHICLES
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